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FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

SYRIA

PART 6

January to December 1952

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FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING
SYRIA—PART 6

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

EY 1016/1

No. 1

POLITICAL SITUATION IN SYRIA

Mr. Montagu-Pollock to Mr. Eden. (Received 10th January)

(No. 4. Confidential) *Damascus,*
Sir. *8th January, 1952.*

In my despatch No. 181 of 11th December, I reported the details of the *coup d'état* carried out on 29th November by Colonel Adib Shishakli. I now have the honour to submit to you the following account of the political situation that has developed here since the new régime installed itself in power.

2. The most obvious aspect of the present situation is the apparent completeness of Colonel Shishakli's control. It is true that there is evidence that most of the army leaders were not consulted about the *coup* but there is none that there is any opposition to Colonel Shishakli within the army. As you know, the army is not large and it cannot be difficult for a shrewd and calculating officer like Colonel Shishakli to ensure that his friends are in the key posts and his enemies are in the remoter parts of the country. Moreover, the Tribal Control Force and the gendarmerie are under the army's direct control. This means that Colonel Shishakli has under his hand all the armed forces in Syria. The Syrians are well aware of this and appreciate that he is prepared, when he thinks fit, to use that force. His control is therefore complete and there is not a murmur against him.

3. In his acts and words he has taken steps to ensure that this feeling of respect for the powerful military man who gets things done—a respect which undoubtedly exists along with a good deal of apathy—shall not fade. He has made the endless bickerings of the politicians the subject of much scorn in his public pronouncements and he has already taken action in a number of fields. The supply of bread was much improved when a few bakers were taken from their bakeries by the soldiers and flogged: the budget is passed and a number of small administrative matters, previously the subject of endless quarrels, have been dealt with. Talks designed to improve

economic relations with the Lebanon have been begun. Promises of even greater activity are freely made. As a result I believe that the apathy that was evident at the time of the *coup* is giving way to the feeling that the new régime may benefit many Syrians and that Colonel Shishakli should therefore be given a run for his money. The difficulty of struggling against armed force is, no doubt, a further argument in favour of giving the régime a trial.

4. One step has been taken by Colonel Shishakli which has had the negative effect of enabling him to avoid the odium and envy, as well as some of the physical danger, that surround anyone in the Middle East who sets himself up as a leader: he has been careful to avoid the trappings of power. He has learnt from the fate of Husni Zaim and dodged behind the throne only twenty-four hours after sitting on it. This was a wise move.

5. This complete control of a docile and even respectful populace cannot, however, conceal the considerable weakness of the colonel's position. As I reported in my telegram No. 365 of 29th November, 1951, the *coup* was made from weakness rather than strength: Colonel Shishakli had to use force because he had no other support that was strong enough to maintain him: and that is still true to-day.

6. Of the four main political groupings, two, the Independent *bloc* and the Republican *bloc*, were never more than groups of independent Deputies whose views were more or less similar on some points. Their only cohesion lay in their membership of Parliament. With the dissolution, the cohesion is gone and the members of the two *blocs* have reverted to being mere individual politicians. Any who seemed dangerous to the régime and had a following, such as Abdurrahman el Azm and Husni Barazi, were locked up by Colonel Shishakli.

7. Of the two big parties which remain, the People's Party is leaderless and hunted: it is likely that any one who tried to put it on its feet would have to work underground and I know of no attempt to do so. Its papers have been suppressed. The Nationalists, who were not represented in the last Parliament as they boycotted the elections, but who still possess considerable strength in the country, are playing a waiting game. At present they are holding aloof and making no definite statement: but I could not rule out the possibility of their making a deal with Colonel Shishakli.

8. This lack of reputable political support is a clear indication that Colonel Shishakli's *coup* was forced upon him, and that he had no time to work out a policy and win over support. He acted solely in order to save himself from being cast aside by the Dawalibi Government. Further indications of the weakness of his position are the probability that elections will not be held for some time, the refusal to allow prominent politicians to leave the country and the continual detention of the imprisoned leaders. I have no doubt but that Colonel Shishakli would hold elections tomorrow if he could be sure that they would produce, without such rigging as would cause a scandal, a Parliament favourable to himself: he would undoubtedly prefer to retire further still into the background, to hide behind an apparently normal democratic Government, provided that his own ultimate power remained untrammelled. The fact that elections are not yet in sight is thus a sign of considerable weakness and this weakness could be exploited, particularly by countries outside Syria, such as Iraq, which are hostile to Colonel Shishakli or which find it expedient to put pressure on him.

9. I believe that the refusal to allow prominent Syrians to leave the country indicates Colonel Shishakli's fear that an *émigré* Government might be set up abroad. I believe also that he would be prepared to release the prisoners (except possibly Husni Barazi) if he were more sure of his own position.

10. The only political support on which he can count so far is that of the numerically weak Arab Socialist Party of Akram Hourani (with its insignificant satellite, the Ba'ath el Arabi) and the Parti Populaire Syrien. The former is extensively penetrated by Communists and the latter bears a strong likeness to Hitler's early National Socialist Party. Colonel Shishakli has for

long been an intimate friend of Akram Hourani and there is evidence that he is working closely with him now: he is believed to share Akram Hourani's views on the necessity for land reform but I doubt if he would put them into effect. On the other hand, he was once a member of the Parti Populaire Syrien, and its programme, which also includes land reform, would have attractions for an ambitious soldier, just as Hitler's did. Moreover, the party offers much to the minority elements in Syria from whom many army officers are drawn.

11. But unless Colonel Shishakli is prepared to rig the elections in scandalous fashion so that these two parties gain a majority, he cannot consider their support sufficient politically, since their present strength is so small. If, nevertheless, army pressure caused them to be voted into power, Colonel Shishakli would lose the support of the propertied classes, who are frightened of Akram Hourani, and would find himself with a most ill-assorted team to drive, since the P.P.S. is strongly anti-Communist.

12. I doubt therefore whether Colonel Shishakli will be satisfied to govern indefinitely by a combination of force and of the support of either or both of these parties. Despite his friendship for Akram Hourani I believe that he is anti-Communist and that he cannot afford to lose the support of the men of substance. The P.P.S. alone are far too weak, even with army backing, to constitute an effective support. The only other party of note is the Islamic Socialist Party, the political label of the Moslem Brotherhood. They too, though influential, are not politically a strong party and such indications of their attitude as I have, suggest that they do not stand well with Colonel Shishakli. Their official attitude is one of aloofness.

13. In these circumstances it is clearly in Colonel Shishakli's interests to proceed very carefully on all matters of political importance and to work to win over to his side some reputable political support; to press on with measures and reforms that are more or less non-controversial and to try to increase popular respect for a régime which can get things done; and lastly to tighten his control of the country by a discreet use of force. All this he is doing.

14. This phase may well last for a considerable time, for although there is not in Syria any rooted love for democracy or any affection for the late Parliament, the politicians may wish to be quite sure they are

doing the right thing for themselves before they agree to work with a man who will insist on driving the car from the back seat and who has shown himself no respecter of politicians.

15. So far as British and Western interests are concerned, the waiting period need not be to our disadvantage. I do not think that Colonel Shishakli will risk giving offence to those elements who are in favour of co-operation with Middle East Command and indeed I am inclined to think—I can put it no more definitely—that he himself sees the likely advantages in the Command. On the other hand, I feel sure that he cannot afford to stir up trouble for himself by openly taking an anti-Egyptian line.

16. As regards internal affairs there are already signs that the administration is proceeding more expeditiously. On bigger matters, such as economic development and the refugee problem, it is possible that the officials now acting as Ministers may be given their heads and may make progress now that they are freed from quarrelsome political heads. On the other hand they may be as frightened to take big decisions as their former chiefs. There are signs of both tendencies and it is too early to predict which will predominate. More disturbing are the indications that the new régime intends to tighten its control of the activities of all foreigners working in Syria. To the Deuxième Bureau, whose powers have undoubtedly increased under the military

régime, foreigners and foreign-owned companies and institutions are suspect of working in some way or other to undermine Syria's control of her own affairs; and the Syrian security agent, anxious to unearth some new case of espionage, has plenty of opportunities to profit by the Arab's love of "telling on someone else."

17. To sum up, it is my view that his control of the army, the increased respect usually accorded to the man of action and the support of one or two minor political parties are sufficient to enable Colonel Shishakli to maintain his position for a considerable time against his internal rivals. Nevertheless, he badly needs the support of reputable politicians and it will be to his advantage to restore the show of Parliamentary Government as soon as possible both to satisfy important elements in Syria and to prevent pressure being put on him from outside. He will therefore work to obtain this support and will go cautiously in important political matters until he gets it. His personal position in the army seems unassailable, but I could not predict his chances of assassination.

18. I am sending copies of this despatch to His Majesty's Representatives at Bagdad, Beirut, Amman, Cairo, Jedda, Tel Aviv, Washington, Paris, Ankara and the Head of the British Middle East Office.

I have, &c.
W. H. MONTAGU-POLLOCK.

EY 1011/1

No. 2

SYRIA: ANNUAL REVIEW FOR 1951

Mr. Montagu-Pollock to Mr. Eden. (Received 8th March)

(No. 30. Confidential) *Damascus,*
Sir, *29th February, 1952.*

I have the honour to submit a review of political events in Syria for the year 1951, for the composition of which I am indebted to Mr. Ian Samuel, First Secretary at this Legation.

I have, &c.
W. H. MONTAGU-POLLOCK.

Enclosure in No. 2

Syria: Annual Review for 1951

Internal

During the year 1951 Syria had three parliamentary Governments and the now
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customary *coup d'état*. The dominant figure was Colonel Shishakli and the theme of Syrian politics was the struggle for power between the army and the politicians. Colonel Shishakli's power rested on his control of the armed forces. The chief political power lay with the People's Party whose leader, Nazim Qudsi, was Prime Minister at the beginning of the year. Although suspected by the army of wishing for union with Iraq, this party seemed disposed to put up with army interference, but only so long as it was not too obtrusive. Colonel Shishakli also seemed inclined to give Qudsi a fair run, provided that the control of all armed forces remained in the army's hands. By March, however, the

strain proved too much for both sides and Qudsi resigned.

2. A new Government of independents and members of the Republican *bloc* was formed by Khalid al Azm who was prepared to condone the army's actions. The People's Party, however, with their majority in the Chamber, would no doubt have quickly brought down Khalid al Azm had it not been for the outbreak of fighting on the Israeli border which rallied public opinion behind the army. When the fighting died down Khalid al Azm was faced with the need to pass a budget inflated with high military expenditure through a Parliament dominated by a party hostile to the army and in July his Government fell.

3. Appreciating the difficulty of governing without the People's Party, and unwilling to trust its leaders, Shishakli next tried a Government with a People's Party rank and file but an independent leader, Hassan Hakim, a pro-Western elder statesman. Hakim avoided conflict with the army by withdrawing the budget for further study and seeking a compromise over the control of the gendarmerie, but his Cabinet was continuously on the brink of a crisis. Its fall came about because the Minister for Foreign Affairs and others were in favour of the usual insulting oratory about the proposals for Middle East Defence whereas Hassan Hakim favoured co-operation with the West. It was, however, the question of army interference that prevented the formation of a new Cabinet. Eventually the People's Party and their Independent allies, apparently with the support of the Nationalists, who had boycotted the previous elections, boldly formed a broad-based Cabinet under Ma'ruf Dawalibi, pledged to remove Colonel Shishakli from power. Before it could act, however, Colonel Shishakli arrested most of its members, together with the People's Party leaders and others whom he knew to be against him. The President resigned rather than condone this action and Colonel Shishakli installed his follower, Brigadier Silo, as Head of State. Finding no reputable politicians ready to serve, he set up a Government of senior civil servants which was still governing at the end of the year. Colonel Shishakli remains Chief of Staff.

4. Since there is little affection in Syria for parliamentary democracy except among those who make a living from it, the majority of the people took the *coup* apathetically and in general only the politicians were upset. They have steadily

refused to have anything to do with Shishakli despite indications from him that he would welcome collaborators in the task of working in the direction of a restoration of the parliamentary régime. The only parties that seemed favourable to him were Akram Hourani's Arab Socialists who, even with their satellite, the Ba'ath Party, are small and much infected with communism, and the *Parti Populaire Syrien*, a swash-buckling National-Socialist group which is also numerically weak.

5. By the end of the year it seemed that Colonel Shishakli was ready to govern for a considerable time through his civil servants and to seize the opportunity to put through the hitherto clogged machine a number of decrees and reforms, so far of a minor character. The budget was also passed by decree. The activities of the Deuxième Bureau have increased and the army's hold on the country is tightening. Foreigners are carefully watched and by the year's end no one had cared to demonstrate in the streets.

6. It is probably true that even though he may have enemies in the army, Colonel Shishakli's fellow officers are too deeply compromised to feel safe in deserting to the politicians. They might wish to replace him from among their own ranks, but no candidates are yet apparent, and his control of postings enables him to ensure that possible opponents are in the wrong place at the right time. His chances of assassination, however, must be considerable.

External

7. Syria's external affairs may be summed up as acute fear of Israel, vague fear of Russia, sentimental anti-"imperialism" and that curious mixture of brotherly love and fratricidal intrigue that characterises the relations of one Arab State with another. In Syria's case this last is complicated by the various plans for the union of Syria and Iraq, Syria and Jordan or Iraq and Jordan.

8. Syrians are obsessed with the danger of Israeli expansion: they point to the smallness of the country and the size of the immigration figures and refuse to be comforted. The fighting in the Huleh area in the spring confirmed their fears, and, in Syrian eyes, even when an Arab State at last got a more or less favourable verdict from the United Nations by the resolution of 15th May, its effect was nullified by General Riley's interpretation of it which permitted the Israelis to continue to drain the marshes, thus giving Israel valuable lands and depriving Syria of a useful military obstacle.

9. Many educated Syrians appreciate the danger of communism, though they are above all concerned with countering Communist activity within the country. This certainly applies to Colonel Shishakli, who will not tolerate any political action in Syria directed from abroad. But few in Syria regard the protection of the free world against armed aggression by Russia as a task in which Syria is called upon to play a part; and her military leaders are inclined to maintain that the Western Powers intend to allow the Russians to overrun Syria and to hold them on the Suez Canal.

10. Syria's relations with the Western Powers remained true to the usual Arab pattern: denunciations of imperialism and Zionism, accompanied by friendly personal relations and by unceasing and not wholly unsuccessful efforts to play one Western Power off against another. Colonel Shishakli mistrusts the United Kingdom because she is allied with his Arab enemies Iraq and, while King Abdullah was alive, Jordan. He was most unhelpful to General Robertson and he judges our worth by our willingness to satisfy his extravagant demands for arms. Our refusal to deliver two Meteor trainers convinced him that we had no use for Syria. Since the *coup d'état*, however, he has been personally friendly and it may be that he is impressed with our stand in Egypt. He no doubt also sees the possibility of getting arms through the proposed Middle East Command which undoubtedly attracted thinking Syrians even though, thanks to Arab solidarity and much activity by the Egyptian Legation, Egypt's "national aspirations" had to be supported.

11. The Americans have made little progress here during the year. Their schemes for providing economic aid have so far been coolly received and the Point IV offer was rejected. Their responsibility for Israeli misdeeds remains great in Syrian eyes.

12. By and large France has succeeded in maintaining her "special position" in Syria. Her influence in the army is great because she alone supplies arms in any quantity; moreover the senior officers are French trained. The French also exert much influence through the Banque de Syrie and there are many French schools. The French are not popular, but they are well dug-in and will fight any attempt by the United States or ourselves to dislodge them. They suspect

any offer of co-operation as an attempt to dislodge them.

13. In the Arab world, Syria's relations with Jordan improved as a result of the death of King Abdullah and after the *coup* negotiations were started with the Lebanon to patch up the economic quarrel. Colonel Shishakli visited King Ibn Saud in the summer and collected the outstanding \$4 million of the Saudi loan. Saudi-Syrian relations seem cordial. Relations with Iraq remain strained because Colonel Shishakli considers that Iraq has not given up hope of swallowing up Syria. Relations with Egypt also lacked cordiality at the end of the year. The Egyptians apparently believed that Colonel Shishakli had not shown sufficient solidarity with Egypt in her "national struggle"—there were no demonstrations after the *coup*—and, by suppressing the politicians and dissolving Parliament, he removed the chief instruments of Egyptian intrigue. Colonel Shishakli, for his part, is believed to have resented Egypt's rejection of the Four-Power proposals for Middle East Defence without consulting the other Arab States, and he will not put up with foreign intrigue in favour of the politicians. Nevertheless the warm feeling of Arab solidarity is still strong, even among army officers.

Economic

14. Economically, 1951 has been a poor year. Although customs receipts have remained high, inefficiency and the dry winter resulted in a bad harvest. The cotton crop was also a serious disappointment owing to the ravages of the boll weevil. This is likely to have a serious effect on Syria's balance of payments and, when it is combined with the prevailing industrial stagnation, on the budgetary position. Moreover, while revenue remained static, military expenditure rose rapidly and the reserve fund was exhausted by the end of the year. There was no disposition during the year to accept foreign help. Not only was aid under Point IV rejected but gift horses from the International Bank and the Mutual Security Act were looked squarely in the mouth. Some progress has been made in setting up the administrative machinery required for some of the much-needed development projects, but neither the proposed Economic Council nor the Board of Technicians has been set up.

BRITISH COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

(1)

Mr. Montagu-Pollock to Mr. Eden. (Received March 7)(No. 54)
(Telegraphic)*Damascus,*
March 7, 1952.

During my absence for the day the First Secretary was sent for yesterday by the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs and informed that the British Council must close in one month. The United States and French Ministers were also asked to close down the Cultural Institutes attached to their missions. Their schools are not so far affected.

2. The Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs insisted that the measure had no political significance but was due to the fact that foreign cultural and press activities here were going beyond the limits of international custom. The First Secretary remarked that you Sir, would be interested in the facts of the matter, which were that the council was being suppressed and that so far as he was aware Syria was the only country outside the Iron Curtain to take such action. He thought that it would be regarded by Her Majesty's Government as an unfriendly act. The Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs attempted defence was

childish, and it is clear that his military masters have taken the decision and left him to inform the Powers as best he can.

3. I understand that the United States Minister took similar line and expressed himself even more strongly. The French Minister was not even told that the last sentence of the memorandum, in Arabic, that was handed to all three Powers, contained orders to shut the institutes. He did not therefore take strong line but is now angry and considers he was tricked.

4. I am in consultation with my colleagues about the next move. I am inclined to seek urgent interview with the Head of the State and tell him forcibly what is thought abroad of this and other recent xenophobe acts about which I shall be reporting separately. My United States colleague is of similar mind. Owing to the Moslem week-end and a Government holiday I shall not be able to see the Head of the State before Sunday, 9th March, at the earliest.

5. Full report will follow by despatch.

(2)

Mr. Montagu-Pollock to Mr. Eden. (Received March 11)(No. 60. Confidential)
(Telegraphic)*Damascus,*
March 10, 1952.

Your telegram No. 129: British Council. Activities in Syria.

I visited the Head of State this morning and warned him that the closing of the British Council would be regarded as a most unfriendly act by Her Majesty's Government and would create a deplorable impression in the United Kingdom.

2. Brigadier Silo said that in order to assume effective control of Syria's cultural relations it was necessary, as a first step, for the Syrian Government to close all foreign institutions operating in Syria without authority. But this did not mean that a good Government wished to restrict cultural relations with the Western Powers; on the contrary, these were to be greatly expanded. Syria needed both technical aid and help in teaching of the English

language, but such aid should be furnished through channels of existing Syrian institutions.

3. I then reminded the Brigadier of a note which I had addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs some four months ago, and which had remained unanswered, in which I had said that I would be glad to consider any suggestions which the Syrian Government might have to make as to how cultural relations between the two countries could be improved. If the Government had any views on this subject I remained ready to discuss them objectively. But nothing was less calculated to create the right atmosphere for such discussions than to put a pistol at the head of the British Council.

4. It was eventually agreed that I should receive in due course an invitation from the acting Foreign Minister to discuss Anglo-Syrian cultural relations, and that in the

meantime action against the British Council should be suspended. I replied that this constituted some improvement on the attitude adopted by the Acting Foreign Minister last Thursday, but I warned the brigadier that I believed that you would continue to insist that the British Council centre was the proper body through which British cultural assistance to Syria should

be canalised. I added that the council's authority to operate in Syria had been implicitly recognised for many years by the Syrian Government, which had frequently had recourse to its services.

5. I hope to follow up this talk with one with Colonel Shishakli who has I believe more grasp of the essentials of foreign relations.

EY 1017/1

No. 4

LEGISLATIVE DECREES ISSUED BY THE NEW SYRIAN GOVERNMENT

Mr. Montagu-Pollock to Mr. Eden. (Received 29th March)(No. 47. Confidential)
Sir,*Damascus,*
21st March, 1952.

I have the honour to report that during the three and a half months that have elapsed since the present régime seized power in Syria, over 160 legislative decrees have been issued. I shall try in this despatch, which I fear must be rather long, to describe the more important of these measures and to estimate the motives behind them and their intended effect. I am indebted to Mr. Swarbreck, my Acting Information Officer, for valuable help in assembling this material.

2. In broad outline it seems that the army, in issuing these decrees, has aimed at strengthening its grip on the country and keeping down all opposition, at ensuring that Syrians have no external political allegiance, at winning popular support, at raising the money required for rearmament, and at undermining the power and authority of the rich and of the old families whose control of votes and mobs could cause the army trouble. These aims sometimes overlap and I have not listed among Colonel Shishakli's intentions the wish to improve the lot of his compatriots because he always makes it clear that it is to the country's greatest advantage that the army should remain in power and it has not seemed to me worth while to attempt to analyse his pronouncements any further. Nevertheless it should be said at once that a great deal of the new legislation would, if properly enforced, be of great benefit to the majority of the people and to Syria as a country. Moreover, a sufficient part of this legislation will almost certainly be enforced to ensure that the whole country is bound to the army either in gratitude or in fear.

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3. The most important of these measures, potentially, is decree No. 96, which aims at depriving the rich landlords of the State lands that they have been exploiting without title, and selling them at a low price in lots of 50 hectares to landless peasants to be selected by the Government, that is, by Colonel Shishakli. I have dealt with this decree in a separate despatch (No. 48 of 21st March) and it is enough to observe here that Colonel Shishakli no doubt hopes that the measure will create a stable and worthy class of peasant proprietors bound by gratitude to the army and will at the same time weaken the old landed families whose political influence he rightly fears. While his calculations may be correct and while social justice may indeed follow this theoretically admirable measure, it is to be hoped that the peasantry and the administration are capable of carrying the burden of responsibility and maintaining food production. If they are not, the results may be very different from those intended.

4. I would next refer to the group of measures designed to introduce discipline into the country and to prevent Syrians from owing allegiance to foreign institutions. I have already reported (in my despatch No. 14 of 22nd January) the measures taken to suppress the Moslem Brotherhood and to weaken the hold of Islam. These measures were undoubtedly taken because Colonel Shishakli felt that the brotherhood had affiliations with foreign countries and that Islam was an aspect of Syrian life that he could not entirely control: his views on the subject might be said to approximate to those of King Henry VIII. It is significant that the final blow fell upon the brethren when they were arranging to send

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volunteers to fight for Egypt against the British.

5. Foreign schools are also to be brought under the control of the State (Decree No. 175) and the activities of foreign business concerns with branches and agents in Syria are regulated by decree No. 151 which restricts the employment of foreigners even in foreign firms operating here. I have discussed this decree in my despatch No. 43 E of 18th March. The attempts being made to restrict or stop the activities of foreign cultural institutions and information officers must be considered together with these decrees as part of a planned campaign to bring the minds as well as the bodies of the Syrian people under the army's control.

6. It is probably partly in the interest of this control that the army has altered the old system whereby those who could afford the exemption fee were able to avoid conscription. The new decree (No. 85) admits of no exceptions, thus ensuring not only that the better educated classes will be available for the army, but that the whole population will at an early stage pass through the army's hands. If this decree is enforced and if it results in the army's material being improved and in Syrian youth learning some much-needed discipline, this measure will prove beneficial.

7. The students at any rate are already being subjected to a measure of discipline. By decree No. 100 both students and their teachers are forbidden to take part in demonstrations or any other political activities. This measure which is being enforced and which fulfils a long-felt need, implicitly recognises that the students are not wholly responsible for their actions by providing penalties not only for the students themselves but also for the politicians who encourage them: parents and guardians may also be held responsible to a limited extent.

8. The civil service and even the Judiciary are also brought to heel by decrees Nos. 65 and 72. Formerly a dismissed civil servant could appeal to the Supreme Court and that court could reinstate those whom it considered to have been wrongfully dismissed. Now the Council of Ministers, which will not, of course, act against the army's wishes, can dismiss any civil servant: no justification is required and no appeal is possible. Only judges are exempt from this regulation, but lest they should imagine that they would thus be allowed to decide cases without interference, the Supreme Court has been abolished by decree No. 72, following the

resignation of three of its judges in protest against the Head of the State's interference, and is replaced by a three-man "Administrative Office." The same decree provides for the transfer of certain prerogatives of the Supreme Court to the Ministry of Justice. The army thus has ensured its control over the legal machinery of the State.

9. Further measures to discipline the Administration are decree No. 68, the result of which will be to make it impossible for a civil servant to resign or leave his job without permission of the army; the oath now required from all civil servants that they will not join political parties; and an increase in their hours of work. If these measures can eradicate the slackness of the administration and, above all, end the purges that successive governments carried out in order to clear away their enemies and make room for their nephews, Syria will certainly have cause for gratitude.

10. There has also been some juggling (decree No. 57) with the regulations governing rates of pay, which will mean a loss to the civil servants: last year they went on strike for a rise, but I should be surprised if this year they raised a murmur against the cut. It is true that decree No. 146 gives them a sop in the shape of increased family allowances for those with numerous children, but the relief in most cases will be slight.

11. The Syrian trades union organisation has always depended on a Government subsidy and the latest decree on the subject (Ministry of National Economy decree No. 151) largely consolidates present practice, but it also provides for assistance, subject to prior approval by the Ministry of National Economy in each case, for the following special projects:—

- (a) Emergency assistance to labour.
- (b) Technical and professional training of workers.
- (c) Suppression of illiteracy amongst workers.
- (d) Labour propaganda and publications.
- (e) Housing construction for workers and official premises for unions.
- (f) Welfare schemes and clubs for workers.

12. Whether any substantial help from the Government for such projects will be forthcoming or not is, of course, a matter for conjecture; but it is encouraging that provision is made and it appears to augur well for the small but already progressive union movement in Syria. This year's Government grant to the unions was much bigger

than those of former years and Colonel Shishakli evidently realises the importance of ensuring that the embryonic labour movement should look on the army as a friend. Since there can be no question yet of an independent trades union movement in Syria, the army's support, even if not disinterested, may well benefit the movement.

13. It remains for me to consider the group of decrees designed to check profiteering and profiteers and to raise money both for the measures of reform and for what is nearest to the army's heart—rearmament. Hitherto business firms have paid no tax if their annual turnover was less than £Syr.50,000 or if their profits were less than £Syr.3,000. But by decree No. 24 tax must be paid if turnover exceeds £Syr.25,000 or profits £Syr.1,500, and large profits are to be taxed on a rising scale. Moreover firms with a turnover of more than £Syr.25,000 are to be compelled, under pain of imprisonment to keep accurate books, and the giving of invoices is made compulsory, by decree No. 103, for merchants, industrialists and wholesalers. Theoretically these decrees should produce a big increase in taxation, but the enforcement of the regulation about book-keeping, on which everything depends, will be difficult in a country where tax-evasion is traditional and easy: in particular it is not clear how it is possible to calculate whether the turnover of a business is above £Syr.25,000 when the owner says it is not and consequently keeps no accounts. There are other inconsistencies in the decree, but in general its purpose is clear and deserving of more success than seems likely to attend it. The big men of the business community are in any case not supporters of the army, which tends to restrict their activities and their ingenuity, and if Colonel Shishakli wishes to squeeze more money from them, he will probably have to use or threaten more forceful methods. It is worthy of note that the small men are not touched by this legislation.

14. Rents and income from real estate, two other sources of wealth, profiteering and, in the case of rent, hardship to the poor, form the subject of decree Nos. 111 and 104 respectively. Formerly the estate tax was 7 per cent. of the rental revenue but it now goes up on a rising scale to between 9 per cent. and 20 per cent. according to revenue. This is at once another blow at the landowners and a necessary piece of social legislation. It is also probably an attempt to check the excessive flow of capital into building—indeed the building trade is

already complaining that the decree is causing a "crisis." The decree on rents is also a necessary reform as it attempts to bring down the present artificially high rents by fixing rent at 5 per cent. of the value of premises and making members of the Valuation Committee Government nominees instead of nominees of the Magistrature. Unfortunately it seems that in spite of this further example of the army taking control the landlords have shown themselves able to bring off successfully a number of manœuvres designed to keep rents high. The army, however, is beginning to show impatience with them and is resorting to requisitioning when accommodation for soldiers is needed.

15. The picture that emerges from this mass of legislation is that of a genuine attempt on the part of the army leaders to put into force measures which will benefit the country, while at the same time strengthening the army's hold on it. Many the parliamentary régime but could not be proceeded with because of the self-seeking of the projects were planned in the days of and discord of the politicians. The new régime has at least caused them to reach the statute book. One of the best of Syria's civil servants, while admitting that the administration was incapable of carrying out the projects, considered it better to enact them and have a try than to do nothing at all. I sympathise with this view and suggest that the omens are not wholly unfavourable. The army is fortunate in having the services of a small number of senior civil servants who are, for an Arab State, exceptionally able and honest. Obstruction to progressive measures on the part of vested interests will have to be covert, so long as the army does not ally itself with those interests. Moreover, prompt and ruthless action against petty corruption can work wonders, as when the army repeated the example of the Zaim régime and improved the quality of bread overnight by simply flogging a few bakers. On the other hand there are formidable obstacles to be overcome. A severe strain is being placed on an inefficient administration. Even the best civil servants do not as yet enjoy the army's wholehearted confidence and are consequently robbed of initiative and drive by fear of losing their jobs. The capacity of the business and land-owning classes to resist progressive legislation remains an unknown factor but is certainly very considerable. In sum, the army appears determined to solve Syria's economic, financial and

social problems, without any real knowledge of these problems, and without having made up its mind whom to turn to for advice. All the politicians with previous experience in government are suspect. So is the businessman, and nothing has so far been done to win his co-operation. Even more suspect is the foreigner. With the exception of one or two United Nations Organisations, such as the Food and Agricultural Organisation and the World Health Organisation, foreign advice is highly suspect and foreign

financial aid even more so. In fact, it appears doubtful whether the leaders of the régime have as yet seriously considered whether they can put their ambitious programme into effect without foreign aid.

16. I am sending copies of this despatch to the Head of the British Middle East Office, Fayid, and to the Head of the Development Division, British Middle East Office, Cairo.

I have, &c.
W. H. MONTAGU-POLLOCK.

No. 5

BRITISH COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

Mr. Montagu-Pollock to Mr. Eden. (Received April 2)

(No. 81. Confidential) *Damascus,*
(Telegraphic) *April 2, 1952.*

Your telegram No. 156: British Council in Syria.

Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs sent for me this afternoon and informed me as follows:—

- (a) Application of order for winding-up of British Council in Syria was suspended until 2nd May.
- (b) Activities of British Council must cease temporarily as from 2nd April.
- (c) A representative of the Syrian Government and one nominated by myself should draw up an agreed document, for submission to the Chief of State on 25th April, recommending line on which cultural relations between the two countries should henceforth be conducted.

2. I told Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs that I regarded item B as being directly contrary to the assurance given to me by the Head of State on the 10th March (please see my telegram No. 60). On that occasion I had clearly been informed that "in the meantime action against the British Council would be suspended," not that "in the meantime activities of the British Coun-

cil should be suspended." I reminded him that your reaction to the original communication made to Mr. Samuel had been most unfavourable, and advised him to warn his Excellency forthwith that this breach of faith would create the worst possible impression in London. In practice Syrian Government were proposing to dictate the outcome of the discussions by suspending British cultural activities before they began.

3. Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs said that he was extremely disappointed by my attitude. The Syrian Government had originally decided that all foreign cultural institutions operating in Syria were to be finally wound up by 2nd April and it was purely as a result of a genuine effort on his part that the full application of the order to the council had been suspended in order to enable friendly negotiations to take place. I made no further comments and left.

4. On my advice Mr. Savage is closing the council premises to the public as from 2nd April. I have sent instructions to the council's representative at Aleppo to do likewise.

5. I will comment further by telegram to-morrow.

CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE SYRIAN MINISTER

(1) Syrian Government's Request for Two Jet Aircraft; (2) Proposed Cessation of the British Council Activities

Mr. Eden to Mr. Montagu-Pollock (Damascus)

(No. 39. Confidential) *Foreign Office,*
Sir, *3rd April, 1952.*

When the Syrian Minister came to see me to-day I raised with him the question of the two jet aircraft which the Syrian Government had been trying to obtain for a long period. I said that this case had been brought to my attention soon after I resumed office, and that I have been doing my best to see that they were made available to the Syrian Government, since I thought that their case for receiving them was a very strong one. I told M. Homsy that I had almost succeeded in convincing my colleagues that, despite the urgency of equipping the Royal Air Force, we could not withhold these two aircraft any longer, when the Syrian Government took their recent action against the British Council. I asked him why his Government had done this and what objection they had to the activities of the Council.

2. The Syrian Minister was clearly uncomfortable, and was unable to adduce any convincing reason for his Government's action, and indeed he admitted that the British Council did a great deal of useful work. I said that I had just received a report from you (your telegram No. 81 of 1st April) of your talk with the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, from which it appeared that the latter had gone back on the assurance given to you by the Head of State in your conversation with him on 10th March. The Syrian Government were now apparently determined that all activities of the British Council should cease on 2nd April, whereas you had previously been informed "action against the British Coun-

cil would be suspended." This was a very different thing.

3. The Syrian Minister said that there must have been a misunderstanding on our side, since he had always been under the impression that the position was as outlined to you by the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs.

4. M. Homsy then said that he could not see why we were considering together the question of the jet aircraft and the cessation of the British Council activities. The two subjects were completely separate. There was no doubt at all that his Government were entitled to have the aircraft, whereas the question of the British Council was one for discussion between our two Governments. I said that while I did not wish to consider the two cases together, nevertheless, were I to announce in Parliament that these aircraft had been released to the Syrian Government, and at the same time it became known that the Syrian Government were taking action against the British Council, I should be subjected to strong and understandable criticism in Parliament. Nobody deplored more than I that the Syrian Government should have taken this action at such a moment, since I had practically obtained permission for the aircraft to be released.

5. We then passed to a general discussion of the situation in Egypt, from which nothing new emerged.

6. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Washington, Paris, Cairo, Beirut and to the Head of B.M.E.O. (Fayid).

I am, &c.
ANTHONY EDEN.

PR 57/17/G

No. 7

OBSERVATIONS ON COMMUNISM IN SYRIA

Mr. Montagu-Pollock to Mr. Eden. (Received 6th May)

(No. 75. Secret) *Damascus,*
Sir, *23rd April, 1952.*

With reference to Sir William Strang's circular letter, PR 89/3 G of 30th January, I have the honour to submit to you the

following observations on communism in Syria. I shall try to show the extent of the problem, the attitude of the present Syrian régime to it and the measures that can be taken by this legation to help in the fight.

2. The most serious aspect of the Communist problem in Syria is that the Syrian authorities are unable or unwilling to catch Khaled Bikdash, the able leader of the Syro-Lebanese Communist Party. If they are deliberately refraining from catching him it may be because they would not know what to do with him when they had him, but it is also possible that the freemasonry which exists among Kurds—for Bikdash is a Kurd—enables him to evade capture; or possible he is simply a good deal cleverer than the security forces: probably all these factors play their part.

3. If it were not for the abilities and continued liberty of Khaled Bikdash I doubt whether communism would be a serious actual problem in Syria, though its potential danger would, of course, always be present. Even with Bikdash at the head of the party, the Communists here do not seem to me to constitute a grave menace. In the first place the number of half-baked intellectuals and students on the one hand and of urban proletariat on the other is small in Syria. Moreover there is not here the great and obtrusive gap between the very rich and the very poor which is prevalent in other parts of the Arab world: I do not think that the Syrian peasant is as wretched as the Egyptian and certainly we have here no pashas comparable with those of Cairo or Alexandria. Although the lot of the share cropper on the big agricultural estates is hard and although these estates are run on almost feudal lines, the peasantry do get a meagre living and reasonable security. Thus, Communist agitation is deprived of its usual material.

4. This does not mean that the Communists do not do their best. There undoubtedly was some communism among the students in Damascus and, although none now dares show it, it is unlikely to have been turned overnight into admiration for Colonel Shishakli. There are still a few half-educated lawyers, journalists, teachers, &c., in Damascus and Aleppo who hold fellow-travelling views, and there is undoubtedly also a number of well-educated and well-informed people who observe that Russia has more troops within striking distance of the Middle East than we have and who are therefore inclined to insure themselves against Russian successes by the convenient method of signing the peace appeal. These people are also no doubt attracted by the publicity they get. But even with these and with the recruits he can collect in the countryside (and, since the

party covers both countries, he has the better-educated Lebanese to draw upon too), Khaled Bikdash is unable even to form the cadres that are usually considered necessary for the organisation of a Communist Party and this is a most important factor in the inefficiency of the party in Syria: it does not have either the brains or the organisation to seize its chances.

5. During the last year or so the greatest danger has lain in the Arab Socialist Party of Akram Hourani. Hourani himself is probably not a Communist, but is certainly opportunist. His party has recently been so penetrated by Communists and Communist sympathisers that it is difficult to believe that Hourani himself is not aware of it. As the party was legal, it became a most useful front organisation for the Communists. Hourani was particularly active in the countryside around Hama and also in Aleppo, which has always been more susceptible to Communist activity than Damascus.

6. Another organisation which achieved some success was that of the Partisans of Peace. The combination of Communists and fellow-travellers, of genuine seekers for peace and of a substantial number of the Greek Orthodox community led, I am sorry to say, by their Patriarch, resulted in the Peace Movement getting off to a good start. In particular it made progress among the leading members of the civil service. It is, however, now generally known, at any rate among the educated Syrians, to be merely an organ of the Soviet Government and has been accordingly somewhat discredited.

7. Among the politicians there was a left wing of the People's Party which was led by Ma'ru'f Dawalibi which might, in certain circumstances, have embraced Communist views. They tended to take the line that any enemy of the Western "imperialists" was a friend of the Arabs and that therefore the Soviet Union and its policies should be supported. This group, which was not large, was, naturally enough, connected with the Partisans of Peace.

8. It will thus be seen that although the danger from communism was and is not serious in Syria it could not and cannot be ignored. Fortunately, the régime of Colonel Shishakli, whatever else may be said of it, is strongly anti-Communist. For this and other reasons the colonel has already introduced measures which are either deliberately aimed at the Communists or will have the effect of making the Syrian soil even less fertile than it was before for their seed. The

main reason why Colonel Shishakli does not approve of communism is that it is a secret society directed by foreigners: this is anathema to him and it might not be an exaggeration to say that even if the Communists' intentions were wholly good they would be unlikely to be allowed to work in Syria by the present régime. Again, Colonel Shishakli has a contempt for politicians, indeed for politics themselves, and after locking up the political leaders of the country, including Dawalibi, he lost no time in returning politically-minded students to their classrooms by force. Political activities are now forbidden not only to students, but also to all servants of the State, including teachers. In many countries of the world it is the army that is forbidden to take part in politics: in Syria it is the civilians. The final blow fell on 6th April, when by Decree No. 197 all political parties, including that of Akram Hourani, were suppressed. This should make activity by the Communists very difficult and the Secretary-General of the Prime Minister's Office has said that the Syrian penal code is not clear enough to enable the courts to put down communism and that the Government is therefore considering issuing a suitable decree on the subject.

9. In passing it should be added that the decree about the distribution of State lands, which I discussed in my despatch No. 48 of 21st March will also probably have the effect of stealing some of the Communists' thunder, though this is unlikely to have been the main reason for its promulgation. The trades unions are under Government patronage and should be easy to control.

10. In these circumstances the work of this legation seems to me to be best directed towards keeping Syrian officials informed of the latest Communist techniques and tactics. The Syrians have the will and it is for us to supply the information. Our main activities are therefore confined to the placing of articles in the press designed to warn the man in the street and periodic discussions with senior Syrian officials aimed at drawing their attention to likely lines of Communist attack. The acting Minister of the Interior as well as the above-mentioned Secretary-General of the Prime Minister's Office seem receptive of this information, and the first-named is given periodic digests of the various intels that I receive from you on this subject. I am also arranging for specimens of the Communist literature which circu-

lates here (such as that which attacks Colonel Shishakli) to be passed to the Military Press Controller in the hope that the army will realise the danger to their own skins. This, I think, is the nearest that I can go to building up the idea among Syrian officials that Her Majesty's Government are the chief providers of information and guidance in combating communism (paragraph 5 of Sir William Strang's letter under reference). Owing to the suspicions of the present régime and of Colonel Shishakli's statement to me that unasked for advice would be regarded as interference, I think it necessary to tread carefully. Nevertheless, I think that our present methods are successful: recently, soon after a member of my staff had spoken to the acting Minister of the Interior about the spurious international conferences sponsored by the Communists, with particular reference to the Moscow Economic Conference and the Vienna Conference in Defence of Children, it was announced that the very trade union leader on whom the Government relied had accepted an invitation to go to the Moscow Conference. We drew the Syrian authorities' attention to this and the leader stayed at home: moreover, we were assured that no Syrians would obtain passports for such conferences.

11. Our work with the press began to suffer somewhat because of the régime's evident desire to minimise contacts between journalists and foreign legations. The situation is now improving and editors seem to regard co-operation against communism as safe. As a result we are getting a very useful amount of material published. One of the chief obstacles to this type of work is the presence of undoubted fellow-travellers among the editorial staffs of papers. Since the top men in Syrian papers so often have other interests, these subordinates have considerable influence and can exclude our material. We are, of course, able from time to time to point these people out to the military press controller and one such opponent was actually removed from the broadcasting station. In time others may go too.

12. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's representatives in Cairo and Beirut and to the head of the British Middle East Office, Fayid.

I have, &c.

W. H. MONTAGU-POLLOCK.

BRITISH COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

Mr. Montagu-Pollock to Mr. Eden. (Received May 2)

(No. 111. Confidential) *Damascus,*
(Telegraphic) *May 2, 1952.*

Your telegram No. 191: British Council in Syria.

On 10th April British Council representative and United States and French Legations received a *questionnaire* from the Syrian Government regarding the activities of their cultural centres. Mr. Savage's reply thereto was drafted in consultation with me. Copies of the documents follow by bag.

2. On 22nd April I spoke to Colonel Shishakli on the lines of [Group undecipherable? your despatch] No. 39. He replied that the decree ordering similar action for all foreign cultural institutions had been issued without his knowledge and that if he had known of it he would not have permitted it. I could rest assured that the Council would not be closed down and that, if it were made subject to certain regulations, all foreign countries would be treated alike and regulations would not go beyond those normally existing in other countries. When I pointed out to him that I had been told by both the Head of State and the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs that I would be invited to take part in an exchange of views with the Syrian Government on cultural relations (please see paragraph 4 of my telegram No. 60 and paragraph 1 (c) of my telegram No. 81) and that I had so far received no such invitation S [group omitted] that he understood that I or Mr. Savage had received a *questionnaire* which had been answered. It was clear that this was all that was meant by an exchange of views.

3. On 30th April the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs sent for me and informed me the commission appointed to study and advise on cultural institutions had issued its report to the Head of State, as a result of which it was proposed to introduce the following regulations:—

- (a) *Classes.*—These would be subject to Law No. 175, the main provisions of which were summarised in my despatch No. 76.
- (b) [Group omitted? *Scholar*] *ships.*—Proposals should be channeled through Foreign Ministry.
- (c) *Libraries.*—These would be open only to Syrians holding cards of admission

issued by the Ministry of Education. Cultural institutes could recommend the issue of cards to whomever they liked, but the issue would be limited in principle to students of age group of the year before baccalaureat and above and, in the case of non-students, to persons of at least 20 years of age. The Ministry should also be provided with a list of books.

(d) *Films.*—There should be no showing of films to the general public. But a limited audience could be invited to a film show provided that the list of invitations were submitted to the Syrian authorities.

(e) *Lectures and Concerts.*—The Syrian Government would require advance notification of these, together with the list of guests invited. When I suggested to the Acting Foreign Minister that invitations may be open to holders of cards of admission to the library, he said that he thought that there would be no objection to this.

4. The Acting Foreign Minister then said that the British Council would be able to continue to function in Syria subject to these regulations, and he hoped that I appreciated the lengths to which the Government had gone to meet us. He added that although the Syrian Government were not prepared to negotiate with foreign Governments regarding their internal regulations, they were prepared, as an act of courtesy, to listen to any comments which I might have to make. I asked him by what date such comments were required, to which he replied by reminding me that the regulations were due to be issued on 2nd May. I then said that I had quite definitely been told by him on 1st April that I should be invited to draw up an agreed document. If this were to be done I must be given time to consult my Government, and I should be grateful if he would inform the Head of State that in view of the assurances which I had received I expected the arrangements to be made to this end.

5. Mr. Savage has gathered from the Secretary-General of the Ministry of

Education that the regulations will probably not be issued until 15th May.

6. I will telegraph my comments as soon as I have consulted my United States

colleague and my French colleague who have been similarly notified by the Acting Foreign Minister.

DETAILS OF NEW MINISTRY

(1)

Mr. Montagu-Pollock to Mr. Eden. (Received June 10)

(No. 156) *Damascus,*
(Telegraphic) *June 10, 1952.*

Decree issued 8th June empowered Head of State to nominate Prime Minister, and Prime Minister to submit names of Ministers to be appointed by Head of State. Henceforth decrees are to be issued by Head of State and to bear signatures of Head of State, Prime Minister and Ministers.

2. Second decree issued same date nominated Brigadier Silo as Prime Minister and on 9th June further decree stated that Head of State (Brigadier Silo) on recommendation of Prime Minister (also Brigadier Silo) had appointed following Ministers:—

- (i) Brigadier Silo, President of the Council of Ministers, Minister of Defence, Minister of Interior

- (ii) Dr. Sami Tayyara, Minister of Education.
- (iii) Dr. Mirshid Khater, Minister of Public Health.
- (iv) Dr. Zafer Rifa'i, Minister for Foreign Affairs.
- (v) Mohamed Said Zaim, Minister of Finance.
- (vi) Munir Diab, Minister of National Economy.
- (vii) Abdel Rahman Huneidi, Minister of Agriculture.
- (viii) Munir Ghannam, Minister of Justice.
- (ix) Tewfiq Haroun, Minister of Public Works.

(2)

Mr. Montagu-Pollock to Mr. Eden. (Received June 10)

(No. 157) *Damascus,*
(Telegraphic) *June 10, 1952.*

My immediately preceding telegram.

Only Sami Tayyara (my No. 128) has held office before and none of the others have been prominent in politics here. Silo yesterday described them as "technicians" and the press refer to the formation of the Cabinet as the "first step towards the return to representative constitutional government."

Most of the new Ministers are rich men with established reputations in their professions. The new Minister of Finance made a pro-British and anti-Egyptian speech at the congress of the Arab Chamber of Commerce in Beirut last December. The new Minister for Foreign Affairs participated in Rashid Ali's *coup* in Iraq in 1941, subsequently escaping to Germany.

NEW SYRIAN GOVERNMENT'S STATEMENT OF POLICY

Mr. Samuel to Mr. Eden. (Received 25th June)

(No. 103. Confidential) Syria,
Sir, 19th June, 1952.

With reference to Mr. Montagu-Pollock's telegrams Nos. 156 and 157 of 10th June announcing the formation of a new Syrian Government, I have the honour to report that the Government's statement of policy was broadcast on 16th June.

2. Although issued by the new civilian Government the statement of policy is unashamedly an Army statement, a Speech from behind the Throne, which begins "now that the army has established a new civil Government which will try to create a Republican Arab Government in Syria." It goes on to describe the *coup d'État*, with almost total inaccuracy, as an Arab national movement universally desired and sprung from the heart of the people and not a movement engineered by individuals: workers, farmers, industrialists, agriculturalists and merchants are all assured that the *coup* was in their interests and the legislation already passed by the régime is listed as proof of the benefits conferred so far. Turning to the future and to the new Government the statement lists among its "primary duties" the preparation for "a return to the form of political life which guarantees the representation of the people." The Government also undertakes to establish in Syria almost all that man could desire—the rule of law, social justice, national unity, agrarian reform, agricultural and commercial prosperity, a sound economic policy, campaigns against disease, free medical treatment, free education up to University standard, efficient administration, and, of course, a strong army well equipped with modern arms.

3. In foreign policy it has evidently been thought necessary to follow the familiar line and the Government therefore undertakes to support the liberation of the Arab peoples and the realisation of their aspirations, to oppose colonisation and to collaborate with the Arab League. Emphasis is laid on the importance of the Arab lands in the international sphere, their strategic position in world communications and their right to complete sovereignty and unity. This is followed by the hint that these desirable allies might be willing to join in the "world

conflict" in return for "the rights they lost in Palestine."

4. It is clear from this statement of policy that the new Government has been formed to cover the bare bones of dictatorship and to give Brigadier Silo a hand in carrying out Colonel Shishakli's plans, not to put forward ideas of its own. The colonel's policy has not changed: he still feels uncomfortable without a screen of democratic forms and is still seeking them, though he intends to keep power in his own hands; he is still imbued with reforming zeal but either has not grasped or feels it better not to admit the necessity of proceeding slowly in such matters; he is determined to build up the army and he appreciates Syria's strategic importance which he seems prepared to use as a bargaining counter; he pays lip service to the ideal of Arab unity but Syria remains "Republican" and he still repeats the slogans of Arab nationalism.

5. The Government and their statement have been greeted enthusiastically by the press and apathetically by the people. As for the Ministers themselves, they are recognised to be reputable men from representative walks of life—Colonel Shishakli told Her Majesty's Minister on his farewell call that this was the reason for their elevation—but they are not expected to make much difference. It is true that not only the Minister for Foreign Affairs but three other Ministers, those of National Economy, Justice and Public Works, spent some time in Nazi Germany and the French *Chargé d'Affaires* is suspicious. While in Germany these Ministers may have acquired a taste for authoritarian forms of Government and they may even be pro-German, but it remains to be seen whether any sinister effect will be produced. There is also a faint flavour of the Nationalist *bloc* about five of the Ministers but it is now very faint and may not be significant.

6. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives in Amman, Beirut, Bagdad, Alexandria, Jedda, Tel Aviv and to the British Middle East Office, Fayid.

I have, &c.

A. C. I. SAMUEL.

WORK OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT

Mr. Samuel to Eastern Department. (Received July 16)

Confidential) Damascus,
July 11, 1952.

In my despatch No. 103 of the 19th June reported that the new civilian Government of Syria was not expected to make much difference. So far this has proved to be the case. The Secretaries-General tell us that they are "training" their new masters but it does not seem that the pressure on Silo has been diminished for I am reliably informed that he is suffering from heart trouble which may be serious. The general political atmosphere here is one of frustration. Shishakli can still get none of the old politicians to play the game according to his rules and he will not allow them to play it according to theirs. Even Issam Muhairi of the P.P.S. who until recently has stood well with the régime, seems to be out of favour: his paper has been suppressed for erasing the Arab League and P.P.S. clichés have all but disappeared from governmental pronouncements. Shishakli is pressing on with the formation of his new government party but even rumour does not mention any well-known names in connexion with it.

2. On the administrative side there is also a pause which is probably a good thing as the attempt to go too fast was leading to chaos. It has apparently been tacitly agreed that Law 96 dealing with the distribution of State lands is unworkable and a revised draft which will bear less hardly on the land-owners is being studied: the intention is to put it into force little by little. Similarly, the opposition, principally from the Christian communities, to Law No. 175 on schools, has made the authorities draw back. Typical of the Administration's methods and difficulties was the regulation obliging all grocers to shut on Fridays: this provoked an outcry from the Christians and was rescinded only to be subsequently reimposed. One hopes that the army will learn in time that, however many obsolete armoured cars they may be able to put into the streets, it does not pay to antagonise large sections of the people: the immediate, unfavourable reaction of the Western

Powers to the proposed measures against foreign cultural centres is part of this salutary lesson. On this particular sector things are quiet at the moment but, of course, xenophobia is very far from dead.

3. Though there is a midsummer pause in internal affairs, I fear that in foreign affairs Shishakli is beginning to slip backwards a little. At the beginning of the year it seemed possible that, without, of course, breaking with the rest of the Arab world, he might be prepared to show some independence: his evident favour towards the P.P.S. with their Syrian imperialism, his toughness with the Moslem Brotherhood and the students suggested that he was not content merely to follow the Egyptian drum. Recently, however the accent has been, as I have reported elsewhere, on Arab solidarity and the old slogans of Arab nationalism and anti-colonialism are crowding out the jargon of the P.P.S. Of course, a man who wants money and support from the Arab States will find it difficult to say anything else, but it is disappointing. I should add that this feeling of solidarity still does not extend to Iraq.

4. These are no more than impressions which you may be interested to have. The slackening of the pace of legislation and the attempt to revise some of the laws ought to prove beneficial: the apparent return to Arab solidarity has not yet resulted in any anti-Western turn and Shishakli may succeed in remaining on reasonably good terms with all of us. As regards the vacuum in political life here, it is difficult to draw any conclusions. The past performances of Syria's professional politicians were not such as to make us grieve over their eclipse: on the other hand, the rugged stupidity of the army (and particularly the *Deuxième Bureau*) in some matters is no improvement on the ineptitude of their predecessors. However, I cannot escape the feeling that the Syrian, particularly the Damascene, needs politics and intrigue like a drug and that the present deprivation is unhealthy.

A. C. I. SAMUEL.

NEW SYRIAN GOVERNMENT'S STATEMENT OF POLICY

Mr. Samuel to Mr. Eden. (Received 25th June)

(No. 103. Confidential) Syria,
Sir. 19th June, 1952.

With reference to Mr. Montagu-Pollock's telegrams Nos. 156 and 157 of 10th June announcing the formation of a new Syrian Government, I have the honour to report that the Government's statement of policy was broadcast on 16th June.

2. Although issued by the new civilian Government the statement of policy is unashamedly an Army statement, a Speech from behind the Throne, which begins "now that the army has established a new civil Government which will try to create a Republican Arab Government in Syria." It goes on to describe the *coup d'État*, with almost total inaccuracy, as an Arab national movement universally desired and sprung from the heart of the people and not a movement engineered by individuals: workers, farmers, industrialists, agriculturalists and merchants are all assured that the *coup* was in their interests and the legislation already passed by the régime is listed as proof of the benefits conferred so far. Turning to the future and to the new Government the statement lists among its "primary duties" the preparation for "a return to the form of political life which guarantees the representation of the people." The Government also undertakes to establish in Syria almost all that man could desire—the rule of law, social justice, national unity, agrarian reform, agricultural and commercial prosperity, a sound economic policy, campaigns against disease, free medical treatment, free education up to University standard, efficient administration, and, of course, a strong army well equipped with modern arms.

3. In foreign policy it has evidently been thought necessary to follow the familiar line and the Government therefore undertakes to support the liberation of the Arab peoples and the realisation of their aspirations, to oppose colonisation and to collaborate with the Arab League. Emphasis is laid on the importance of the Arab lands in the international sphere, their strategic position in world communications and their right to complete sovereignty and unity. This is followed by the hint that these desirable allies might be willing to join in the "world

conflict" in return for "the rights they lack in Palestine."

4. It is clear from this statement of policy that the new Government has been formed to cover the bare bones of dictatorship and to give Brigadier Silo a hand in carrying out Colonel Shishakli's plans, not to put forward ideas of its own. The colonel's policy has not changed: he still feels uncomfortable without a screen of democratic forms and is still seeking them, though he intends to keep power in his own hands; he is imbued with reforming zeal but either has not grasped or feels it better not to admit the necessity of proceeding slowly in such matters; he is determined to build up an army and he appreciates Syria's strategic importance which he seems prepared to use as a bargaining counter; he pays lip service to the ideal of Arab unity but Syria remains "Republican" and he still repeats the slogans of Arab nationalism.

5. The Government and their statements have been greeted enthusiastically by the press and apathetically by the people. As the Ministers themselves, they are recognised to be reputable men from representative walks of life—Colonel Shishakli told Her Majesty's Minister on his farewell call that this was the reason for their elevation—they are not expected to make much difference. It is true that not only the Minister for Foreign Affairs but three other Ministers, those of National Economy, Justice and Public Works, spent some time in Germany and the French Chargé d'Affaires is suspicious. While in Germany the Ministers may have acquired a taste for authoritarian forms of Government but they may even be pro-German, but it remains to be seen whether any sinister effect will be produced. There is also a faint flavour of the Nationalist *bloc* about five of the Ministers but it is now very faint and may not be significant.

6. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives in Amman, Beirut, Baghdad, Alexandria, Jeddah, Aviv and to the British Middle East Office, Fayid.

I have, &c.

A. C. I. SAMUEL

WORK OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT

Mr. Samuel to Eastern Department. (Received July 16)

(Confidential) Damascus,
July 11, 1952.

In my despatch No. 103 of the 19th June I reported that the new civilian Government of Syria was not expected to make much difference. So far this has proved to be the case. The Secretaries-General tell us that they are "training" their new masters but it does not seem that the pressure on Silo has been diminished for I am reliably informed that he is suffering from heart trouble which may be serious. The general political atmosphere here is one of frustration. Shishakli can still get none of the old politicians to play the game according to his rules and he will not allow them to play it according to theirs. Even Issam Muhairi of the P.P.S. who until recently has stood well with the régime, seems to be out of favour: his paper has been suppressed for deriding the Arab League and P.P.S. clichés have all but disappeared from governmental pronouncements. Shishakli is pressing on with the formation of his new Government party but even rumour does not mention any well-known names in connexion with it.

2. On the administrative side there is also a pause which is probably a good thing as the attempt to go too fast was leading to chaos. It has apparently been tacitly agreed that Law 96 dealing with the distribution of State lands is unworkable and a revised draft which will bear less heavily on the land-owners is being studied: the intention is to put it into force little by little. Similarly, the opposition, principally from the Christian communities, to Law No. 175 on schools, has made the authorities draw back. Typical of the Administration's methods and difficulties was the regulation obliging all grocers to shut on Fridays: this provoked an outcry from the Christians and was rescinded only to be subsequently reimposed. One hopes that the army will learn in time that, however many obsolete armoured cars they may be able to put into the streets, it does not pay to antagonise large sections of the people: the immediate, unfavourable reaction of the Western

Powers to the proposed measures against foreign cultural centres is part of this salutary lesson. On this particular sector things are quiet at the moment but, of course, xenophobia is very far from dead.

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A. C. I. SAMUEL.

EARL MOUNTBATTEN'S VISIT TO DAMASCUS

Mr. Samuel to Mr. Eden. (Received 20th August)

(No. 125. Restricted) *Damascus,*
Sir, *August 8, 1952.*

With reference to your despatch No. 83 (E 1212/2) of the 23rd June, I have the honour to report that Admiral the Earl Mountbatten of Burma, K.G., Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean, paid an official visit to Damascus on the 4th August. He was accompanied by Countess Mountbatten and Lady Brabourne.

2. Lord Mountbatten arrived by air at Mezzé Airport, Damascus, and was received by a guard of honour. I accompanied him to the presidency to sign the register and thereafter during his calls on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Chief of Staff, Colonel Shishakli, the Mohafez of Damascus, and the Head of State, Brigadier Silo. The latter had only just recovered from his recent illness and had, I understand, come to Damascus from the hill-town of Zebdani, where he is convalescing, specially to greet Lord Mountbatten.

3. After the calls, the Minister for Foreign Affairs gave a large luncheon for the Commander-in-Chief and Lady Mountbatten which was attended by members of the Government, the Chief of

Staff and Madame Shishakli and members of the staff of Her Majesty's Legation. In the afternoon, after a brief shopping expedition, the Commander-in-Chief and Lady Mountbatten attended a garden-party which I gave in the legation garden to enable members of the British community and the diplomatic corps to meet them: Colonel Shishakli, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and other members of the Government were also present. After this the Commander-in-Chief left for the airport on his return journey.

4. The Syrian leaders warmly welcomed the Commander-in-Chief and were friendly and cordial in conversation. I am sure that they would have genuinely liked him to have stayed longer. The arrangements made by the Syrian authorities for the very full programme were very satisfactory.

5. The press covered the visit fully, but no editorial comment was made except for one short article by a near-Communist who suggested that the Commander-in-Chief had come to Syria and the Lebanon to look for anchorages for his fleet.

I have, &c.

A. C. I. SAMUEL.

possible competition, which is now becoming a more live issue, in view of the possibility of International Bank finance for the work on the port of Lattakia itself and for communications inland, as reported in Mr. Samuel's letter of 15th August to Mr. Ross.

4. To some extent the linking of the construction of a modern port and a railway to the Jezireh conforms to the Lebanese appreciation of the situation. Syria, the Lebanese point out, is a country which, for her trade, falls naturally into two parts, north and south. The traditional port for North Syria (consisting of Aleppo, Homs, Hama and the Jezireh) was, until the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Alexandretta. The Lebanese tend to look back to this period and to regard the development of Lattakia not so much as a potential competitor for Beirut as a replacement for Alexandretta. South Syria (Damascus, the Jebal Druse and Horan) have traditionally relied on Beirut, as Lattakia is a long way off. From Lattakia to Damascus is almost 400 kilom.; while from Beirut to Damascus is only a little over 100 kilom. This differential, the Lebanese believe, should affect consumer prices sharply enough to make the use of Lattakia uneconomic as a supply port for South Syria.

5. The port of Beirut handled in 1951 some 1,135,000 tons of goods, brought in by over 2,000 ships, with a total tonnage of almost 3 million. Of the merchandise handled, some 600,000 tons were represented by transit trade, and of this amount only 15,000 tons were Syrian exports. Almost 500,000 tons were goods destined for Syria, and, if Beirut keeps half this (for the southern half of Syria), there will be sufficient traffic to keep the port busy. This is emphasised by a remark made to a member of my staff by the director of the port Company that the port was handling at least 100,000 tons per annum beyond its present convenient capacity, which it could well do without. Moreover, the Lebanese see little reason to fear the loss of the small but by no means negligible transit trade to and from Iraq, Jordan, Persia and the Persian Gulf. Such increases of traffic through Lattakia as have already occurred have been, the Lebanese claim, not

diversions of transit trade from Beirut, but indications of increased Syrian agricultural production (especially of cotton), and resulting increased imports of manufactured goods for Syria (especially for the Aleppo district).

6. The Lebanese also point to—

- (a) the high capital outlay necessary to develop Lattakia: this has been estimated at £Syr. 100 million, but some difficulties on this score may be removed if the International Bank assist.
- (b) the absence of rail outlets from Lattakia, although this difficulty may again be removed at some time in the future if the International Bank provide funds.
- (c) the physical difficulties, which have already caused trouble over construction at Lattakia, including the depth of water, in some places 40 feet.

7. Despite this rather complacent attitude towards possible competition, the Beirut port authorities are nevertheless looking to the future and developing plans for maintaining Beirut's precedence as the chief port of the Eastern Mediterranean coast. Their plans include building new warehouses and enlarging the Free Zone, the enclosure of a new basin, the building of wharves and the extension of the main jetty by 400 metres to give better protection against disturbed water entering the harbour during northerly gales. Some of these improvements have already been started: it is estimated that they will cost the port company the equivalent of £4½ million sterling and will increase the capacity and improve the turn-round time of the port. They should also lead to considerable economies in operation and would then give the port authorities a wider margin by which they could reduce charges, should it be necessary to do so in order to retain traffic against competition.

8. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Damascus, Cairo, Bagdad and Amman and the Head of British Middle East Office in Fayid.

I have, &c.

E. A. CHAPMAN ANDREWS.

LEBANESE ATTITUDE TO THE SYRIAN PLAN TO DEVELOP THE PORT OF LATTAKIA

Mr. Chapman Andrews to Mr. Eden. (Received September 4)

(No. 184 E. Restricted) *Beirut,*
Sir, *August 29, 1952.*

It is now more than two and a half years since the Syrian Government first announced that work was to be put in hand to enlarge and modernise the port of Lattakia, and I see from paragraph 15 of Damascus political summary for July that new tenders for the construction of a deep-water harbour there have been received by the Syrian Government.

2. The original announcement came at a time when relations between Lebanon and Syria were strained, and in the heat of the moment the Lebanese were both indignant

and apprehensive at what they considered a deliberately unfriendly act aimed at taking trade away from the port of Beirut.

3. Since then despite Syrian efforts, backed in some cases by legislation to persuade Syrian exports and imports to pass through Lattakia instead of Beirut, the Lebanese economy and the port of Beirut have until recently enjoyed a period of relative prosperity, and although trade is at present dull in the local Beirut market the number of ships and the tonnage of goods passing through the port do not seem to have been affected. The Lebanese do not seem to be particularly disturbed at the

THE ARAB LIBERATION MOVEMENT

Activities of Colonel Shishakli

Mr. Samuel to Mr. Eden. (Received 15th October)

(No. 156. Confidential) *Damascus.*
Sir, 10th October, 1952.

In my letter to Mr. Ross of 5th September I reported that in the political life in Syria during the summer there has been much frustration and hanging back coupled with considerable activity beneath the surface. Colonel Shishakli has been trying vainly to win the co-operation of able and distinguished men and to build up his Government party, the Arab Liberation Movement, but he has failed to drum up either recruits or enthusiasm. Recently he seems to have decided that the rate of progress was so slow that it would be better for him openly to demand support. He has, therefore, started something of a publicity campaign, with telegrams from villages announcing the adherence of the village notables, &c., and on 5th October he called a meeting of all the *Mohafezes* (provincial Governors). At this meeting he made a speech in which he claimed that the decree dissolving the former political parties had not been effectively enforced, that the members of those parties were trying to prevent Syrians from joining the Arab Liberation Movement and were "putting sticks in the wheels of reform." "These people," the colonel went on, "do not serve the country and do not allow others to serve it." He went on to urge the Governors to remember that they were the servants of the public, to "supervise" the administration of the country and work in the closest co-operation with the army.

2. The colonel is not, however, confining himself to harangues. The civil servants and university teachers who have so recently taken the oath to abstain from political activity are now being subjected to pressure to join the Arab Liberation Movement. The Secretary-General of the Ministry of the Interior, an honest and experienced Christian official who would have objected to jobbery, has been removed and a party man put in his place: the Governors of two provinces have also been changed. The prospects of a good post, sometimes a legation abroad, are dangled before those whom it is hoped to entice into the movement. There are even reports that those who decline to join are warned of the consequences of over-fastidiousness. The object

is to expand the Arab Liberation Movement around the hard but small core of the Cabinet and the founding members, a significant number of whom were trained in or have had close contact with Germany. When the movement has reached a respectable size, Colonel Shishakli will be able to hold elections and ensure that his movement gets into power. The pressure on the civil servants to join will both swell the ranks of the movement and make sure that the elections give the desired result. The Governors will no doubt know what the exhortation to co-operate with the army means when the elections are held.

3. These pressure tactics have not been in operation for long enough to enable a judgment of their effect to be made. So far the reaction among civil servants and university teachers has been one of anxiety. On the one hand, it is hinted to them that their jobs may depend on their joining the movement and, on the other, they fear that if they do so and if Colonel Shishakli's régime disappears they will be victimised by his successor. I believe that this is a far more potent cause of hanging back than the alleged activities of the old political parties. However, if they are active and wish to discourage people from supporting the régime, they could hardly find a better way of doing so than by carefully pointing out the risks.

4. Indeed, it is easy to sympathise with the difficulties now facing the educated classes in Syria. The risks are very real, for even if as a reward for taking service under Colonel Shishakli they are given good and lucrative jobs, recent events in the Middle East have shown them that they may find it difficult to hold on to even legitimate gains: now that corruption and the promotion of family interests are frowned upon, at any rate for civilians, there is less incentive to enter the public service. Moreover, even those who wish to serve honestly cannot relish constant interference by the army and the risk of denunciation by the enterprising lieutenants who run the *Deuxième Bureau*. Such a case has just occurred in Syria, for the honest and able Naïm Bey Antaki has, with some difficulty, succeeded in excusing himself from serving on the

Syrian delegation to the United Nations General Assembly on the ground of illness, though the illness does not prevent him from carrying on his busy law practice in Damascus.

5. Men of this type are not actively opposing Colonel Shishakli and, indeed, the opposition to him from the civilians does not seem to be formidable. The feudal landlords and former politicians are disgruntled and sullen but they can hardly resist a man who wields the only force in the country. The smaller middle class are probably in favour of the new régime and glad to see the end of futile party quarrels. I doubt whether the mass of the people cares either way. Perhaps one of the main reasons why there is no serious opposition among civilians is because there is no prominent figure in civilian life around whom their hopes could crystallize. If Colonel Shishakli were removed, the only apparent alternative would be another army officer.

6. It is much more likely that active opposition would come from ambitious but disappointed army officers and there are frequent rumours of *coups* having been nipped in the bud. It is impossible to keep track of these, but it is a fact that senior officers are moved from time to time to somewhat unexpected posts. This frequent and sudden shuffling of the pack is, together with the *Deuxième Bureau*, Colonel Shishakli's safeguard.

7. Thus, the prospects of Colonel Shishakli's régime depend on his ability to awaken enthusiasm in those sections of the population which could provide him with the leaders and administrators that Syria needs. He has tried persuasion with little

success and is now resorting to discreet pressure. In these circumstances it is not to be expected that he would have much to show for his eleven months in office. On the other hand, he has given the country law and order and calm and, with the legislation that has already been passed and is in preparation (I hear now, for instance, that a national health scheme has been worked out in detail), he has laid down the lines along which it would be possible for Syria to make progress. Whatever may be said of the principle of coercing people into service, it is difficult not to feel some sympathy with the colonel when potentially good men prefer to leave the Government in inexperienced hands. There was a distinct note of exasperation in the colonel's speech to his Governors and he ended with the words: "This régime is the last of the experiments of our country: the extent of its success will be the proof of the ability of the people, of their worthiness to live and of their qualification for development and progress." Since it is difficult to imagine the army giving up power or to see what good could come of the return of the bickering street politicians, a benevolent dictatorship would indeed appear to be Syria's last chance of going forward: if that is the case, it is a pity that moderate men of goodwill are so reluctant to co-operate. By hanging back there is the risk that the field will be left to the cruder spirits.

8. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives in Amman, Bagdad, Beirut, Cairo and Jedda and to the head of the British Middle East Office, Fayid.

I have, &c.

A. C. I. SAMUEL.

CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE SYRIAN AMBASSADOR

Anglo-Syrian Relations

Mr. Eden to Mr. Montagu-Pollock (Damascus)

(No. 137. Secret) *Foreign Office.*
Sir, 28th October, 1952.

The Syrian Ambassador came to see me for his first interview this afternoon. This turned out to be of more than ordinary interest. Without any encouragement from me, he soon departed from the ordinary generalities of these courtesy calls and embarked on a message from Colonel

Shishakli. He said that he had been charged to tell me that his Government desired the closest possible relations with Her Majesty's Government. They had not forgotten the part that Britain had played in the liberation of Syria (I tried to look non-committal at this), nor the encouragement I had given to the Arab League in the earlier years. Admittedly there had been a difficult period.

At the same time his country were prepared to be a loyal friend of ours if we so desired it. In fact, he had been charged by Colonel Shishakli to tell me that if we wished to make an alliance with Syria or any other arrangement of that kind, the Syrians were prepared to co-operate.

2. In the course of further discussion, I gathered that the sale of jet aircraft had apparently made a considerable impression. In addition, the Syrians appeared to have been impressed by the Turkish visit and the close relations which this revealed. At one time the Ambassador referred to MEDO, a topic which I had not raised. He asked when were we going to approach the Arabs about this and why we had not done so before getting our plans complete. I said that we had not got our plans complete. M. Faiz El-Khoury then asked what the Turkish Prime Minister meant by saying that we hoped the Arabs would come in but that we were going ahead anyway with our scheme. I said that this was true as a statement of where we stood, but in fact the details had not been worked out, and far from wishing to slight the Arab States by going too far ahead without them we had been carefully considering how to approach them in such a way as not to embarrass them. What we wanted to avoid above all was a refusal and the taking up of positions on both sides. The Ambassador said he fully understood this and thought we were quite right not to rush matters or handle them in the way we did last time when we appeared to present the Arab States with a *fait accompli*.

3. I said that there were other difficulties. I was not sure that this was the right moment to open discussions with Egypt and Iraq was in the throes of elections. But I asked the Ambassador to accept the fact that we would welcome Arab participation in MEDO and welcome suggestions as to how the matter could best be handled. This was precisely what we had discussed with the Turks. The Ambassador agreed it was no

doubt quite right to discuss these matters with the Turks, but why not with the Arabs also? No doubt we rightly regarded the Turks as reliable allies. But they had had a thousand million dollars of economic aid from the United States. Syria would certainly like to be a good ally, too. I said that we would gladly welcome this, but I had not a thousand million dollars. The Ambassador laughed at this. At the same time, he continued, if we thought of bringing the Arab States into MEDO, they would welcome discussions upon such matters as equipment and the plans which had to be prepared. The Ambassador's general attitude to Turkey was, I thought, unenthusiastic, though he admitted that their relations were now satisfactory, but the word "Alexandretta" did slip out.

4. At this point I had to tell the Ambassador that I must leave him to vote at the House of Commons, but that we would resume our discussions at an early date.

5. It seemed to me pretty clear that the Ambassador had had a definite message from Colonel Shishakli to raise these matters with me, and at one time in the conversation when I was speaking of Egypt, his Excellency expressed the confident hope that we should find the new régime there more realistic. Syria was anti-Communist, not because she wanted to be our friend but because the people were so in their religious faith. Syria, he knew, had need of us and knew that we could be good friends to them; though it might be impertinent to say that we had need of Syria, he thought perhaps I would not mind if he put it this way—that even Syria might be able to help us a little with the Arab World.

6. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassadors at Washington, Paris, Cairo, Ankara, Amman, Bagdad, Beirut, Tel-Aviv, Jedda and to the Head of the British Middle East Office at Faiyid.

I am, &c.

ANTHONY EDEN.

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No. 16

NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS

Mr. Samuel to Mr. Eden. (Received 17th December)

(No. 200. Confidential) Damascus,
Sir, December 12, 1952.

I have the honour to inform you that the 3rd December, the anniversary of the installation of Syria's present military régime, was celebrated as the new National

Day with a great military parade through the streets of Damascus. Parades were also held in other towns throughout the country.

2. The proceedings in Damascus began with speeches by Colonel Shishakli and General Selo. The latter confined himself

to reading a dull review of the régime's work, chiefly in the fields of national economy and agriculture, and left his nominal subordinate to say the important things. This reflects the true status of the two men. Colonel Shishakli's speech was delivered with great fervour but evoked comparatively little cheering: this is probably because the Syrian rarely cheers his rulers unless paid to do so. The colonel emphasised three themes, the complete break with the bad old days of Syria's corrupt and useless politicians, the bright future that lay before a regenerate Syria and the hope of Arab unity: all this had been or would be realised with the active aid and moral support of the army that was about to march past. Considering the occasion and the lavish praise that had to be given to the army ("the rattle of whose arms makes the hearts of our enemies tremble"), the speech was moderate and very different from the swashbuckling harangue delivered at Homs last August (Damascus Chancery letter of the 22nd August). The final note was that the army was not only a Syrian but an Arab army ready to sacrifice itself for "the Arab cause and the Arab land."

3. Then came the march past. It began with a procession of some slightly self-conscious athletes marching uncomfortably in football boots, followed by large numbers of Boy Scouts and Girl Guides many of whose formations must surely have been called into existence for the occasion. The reason for the presence in a military parade of so many civilians and so many young girls and boys was to demonstrate the regeneration of the whole people and their solidarity with the military régime.

4. The march past of the armed forces then began. Infantry, artillery (including self-propelled), armoured cars and tanks, together with naval, air force, signal, engineer and medical detachments went past hour after hour. Overhead the two Gloster Meteor trainers and other aircraft flew past after which one Meteor gave a brief but spirited display of aerobatics: the admiring crowds did not know that the pilot was Mr. Kilburn of the Gloster Aircraft Company.

5. The parade was impressive. The men, most of whom were ordinary Arab villagers conscripted, marched with precision and pride. Their turn-out was smart and their equipment good. The vehicles were all well-kept and many were obviously new. The proportion of tanks serviceable to

total strength was strikingly high and over sixty went past. The organisation was faultless and there were no gaps and no bunching: one tank broke down and was smartly towed away by a recovery vehicle. Both the naval and the military attachés consider that this parade reflects great credit on the Syrian military authorities who have undoubtedly transformed the Syrian army. The weakness of the army is not in the men or, in relation to the resources of the country, the equipment: it is in staff work and leadership. Nevertheless from the parade on the 3rd December it is evident that progress is also being made under these two heads.

6. Politically the day was a success for the régime. There was evidence for all to see that Colonel Shishakli had indeed spent the country's money on new military equipment and not on enriching himself: there was proof that the country was growing stronger and approaching that position of respect that every Arab thinks is the Arabs' due but which he believes is always denied them by unfriendly foreigners. To see 30-ton tanks and jet aircraft going by in Syrian colours and under absolute command of Syrians must be an important experience for a people who for hundreds of years have had no army of their own, who relied on an alien ruler for their defence and who, if they wanted to follow the profession of arms, had to do so in a foreign language and a foreign uniform. As a result of this parade there is more support and more respect for Colonel Shishakli: the spirit in Syria is better. I do not wish to give the impression that this parade has evoked the sort of enthusiasm that would greet the march-past of a newly constituted Wehrmacht in Berlin: the Syrians do not like being ruled and are not militarists: they are not flocking to join Colonel Shishakli's Arab Liberation Movement. But they are feeling a little more confident and a little more cheerful.

7. Of course there is criticism: the Damascus lawyer-type does not change so quickly and likes a strong master even less than most of his countrymen do. He is saying that if so much money is going to be spent on guns, taxes will go up and, what is worse, if the Administration of the country is strengthened and improved, he may even have to pay the taxes in full. But if Colonel Shishakli can retain the respect he has gained and can continue to give the impression that he is making progress

internally and externally—in this connexion the presence at the parade of a strong military delegation from Iraq, which, by its presence indicated recognition of the régime, was another feather in his cap—then the disgruntled politicians and lawyers will continue to be harmless.

8. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives in Amman, Bagdad, Beirut, Cairo and Jeddah and to the head of the British Middle East Office, Fayid.

I have, &c.
A. C. I. SAMUEL.

APPENDIX

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

EY 1012/1

No. 17

LEADING PERSONALITIES IN SYRIA

Mr. Samuel to Mr. Eden. (Received 15th July)

No. 114. Secret) *Damascus,*
ir, *10th July, 1952.*

With reference to Mr. Montagu-Pollock's despatch No. 103 of 2nd July, 1951, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the revised report on the leading personalities in Syria.

I have, &c.
A. C. I. SAMUEL.

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LEADING PERSONALITIES IN SYRIA

Mr. Samuel to Mr. Eden. (Received 15th July)

(No. 114. Secret)
Sir,

*Damascus,
10th July, 1952.*

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I have, &c.
A. C. I. SAMUEL.

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110. Tahsin, Said.
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112. Tarazi, Faluk (Miss).
113. Tayyara, Sami.
114. Trabulsi, Izzat.
115. Zaim, Muhammad Said.
116. Zainuddin, Farid.

1. A'as, Shakir

Age about 45. Moslem. Studied economics in America and France and has been connected with various industrial projects in Syria. Counsellor at the Syrian Legation in Paris 1945-46. Prominent member of the Popular Party and editor of the party organ *Es Shaab*, which, after a brief reappearance during the autumn of 1949, ceased to publish as a result of the army's *coup* of December 1949. Elected to Constituent Assembly in 1949 as Deputy for Quneitra, Minister of National Economy and Agriculture in the Cabinet formed by Nazim Qudsi on 4th June, 1950. Minister of Finance in two successive Governments under Nazim Qudsi (*q.v.*) from September 1950 to 27th March, 1951. Minister of National Economy under Hassan Hakim (*q.v.*) from 9th August to 10th November and Foreign Minister under Ma'ruf Dawalibi (*q.v.*) on 28th November. On 29th November he was imprisoned by Colonel Shishakli after the latter's *coup d'Etat*. Released in April 1952.

Is said to have Leftish tendencies and to be an opportunist.

2. Abdulkarim, Aziz, Colonel

An Alouite Moslem, born in 1908. Became Inspector of Artillery with the rank of lieutenant-colonel in 1949, Director of Artillery in 1950, Commander of the Northern Region based on Aleppo in 1951 and full colonel and Officer Commanding, 4th Bureau, in 1952.

An artillery officer who dislikes paper work and his present employment. He is honest, conscientious and practical though pig-headed. Reputedly dislikes the British.

3. 'Aidi, Abdul Karim

Born 1903. Educated in Damascus, but while still a student was sentenced to five years' imprisonment following the Crane Commission incidents and fled to Transjordan, where he met King Ali, whom he accompanied to the Hedjaz. Returned to Damascus in 1927; principal of the Ulmihah College 1929-39. Fled to Bagdad to escape arrest by the French, but returned in 1941. Kaimakam of Douma 1943-45. Director of Police, Damascus, April 1945 to May 1946, during which period he was on very friendly terms with the officers of the British Military Security Mission and proved very co-operative. Mohafez of Deri' 1946-47. Appointed Mohafez of Hama December 1948. Was a leading member of the League of National Action and, consequently, works in close harmony with the President and the National Party. He is a close friend of Shukri Quwatly. Appointed Director of Tribal Control in July 1949. Appointed Mohafez of the Euphrates in June 1951.

4. Ajlani, Munir

Son of Darwish Ajlani. Born, Damascus 1910. Studied in France, where he graduated as doctor of law. Author of a book on Syrian Constitution. Elected Deputy 1936. At outset of Nationalist régime he, with Seif ed Din Ma'moun, Ahmad Samman and Mohamed Sarraj, organised the "Iron

Shirts" (an organisation based on Nazi Brown Shirts) and was one of the commanders until it was taken over by Nizhat Mamluk 1937. Soon after, the movement was suppressed by French following disorders in Aleppo and Latakia.

Although his age had been amended by Nationalists to enable him to become Deputy (minimum 30), he bitterly opposed Nationalists in Parliament. In 1938 he and Zeki el Khatib were arrested and tried for writing a manifesto attacking Nationalist Government, but were acquitted.

When Dr. Shabbandar returned to Syria, Ajlani supported him and remained one of his intimates until Shabbandar's murder in July 1940, when he gradually ceased his connexion with the party.

In September 1941 he was appointed head of Sheikh Taj ed Din's secretariat, and when on 17th April, 1942, Cabinet was reshuffled Sheikh Taj made him Minister of newly created Ministry of Youth and Propaganda in the Government of Husni Barazi. Was a member of Jamil Ulshi's Government (January 1943 to March 1943), occupying the same Ministry, the name of which was changed to Ministry of Social Affairs (January 1943). Married on 20th August, 1942, the daughter of Sheikh Taj. Appointed lecturer in Roman law at Damascus University, March 1943. Professor of Law College 1945. Deputy for Damascus 1947. Minister of Education in Jamil Mardam's second Government October 1947. Member of Syrian Delegation to Arab League Conference in Beirut October 1947.

Conceited individual, vacillating yet obstinate. Imprisoned by Zaim for publishing a pro-Hashemite article. Is considered a good speaker by Arabs.

Elected as an Independent to the Constituent Assembly in November 1949. An advocate of union between Syria and her Hashemite neighbours, Ajlani was arrested in September 1950 together with Lieutenant-Colonel Bahij Kallas (*q.v.*) on charges of conspiring against the security of the State with the Jordan Government. After trial by a military tribunal Ajlani was acquitted in January 1951. Minister of Justice in Ma'ruf Dawalibi's (*q.v.*) Government, 28th to 29th November. Imprisoned by Colonel Shishakli. Released in February 1952. Dismissed from the School of Law at Damascus University in March for refusing to take an oath to abstain from politics.

5. Akras, Michel

Maronite Archbishop of Aleppo. Born 1877. Educated in the Maronite College at Beirut. Concealed British Consulate archives during the war of 1914-18. Probably the most sincere prelate in the Aleppo area, but neither his health nor influence is strong now. He hopes for the continuance of European influence in Syria.

6. Alexandros III, Tahhan

Born in Damascus in 1869, where he was educated in the Greek Orthodox School. His brilliance and his steadiness led to his being sent to the Ecclesiastical College in Constantinople. In 1894 he returned to Damascus and two years later went to the religious academy in Kiev. Studied for a few years in Moscow. In 1903 he was appointed Bishop of Adana and Tarsus, but was badly received by the population there and resigned in 1906. In 1908 he was appointed Bishop of Tripoli and remained there until 1930, when he was elected Patriarch of Damascus by the Damascus electors but not by other members of the electoral college, who elected Arsanios, Bishop of Latakia. A schism resulted and the three other patriarchs (Alexandria, Constantinople and Jerusalem) sent representatives to conduct an enquiry into the election. They finally gave their opinion in favour of Alexandros. The schism, however, persisted until the death of Arsanios in

1932. Alexandros has been criticised for his weak handling of the Epiphanos revolt in 1935, which resulted in the formation of an independent church in Latakia in 1936. This independent community existed until 1939, when the French High Commissioner threatened to declare it illegal. Since that date Epiphanos and the Patriarch have been reconciled. The Italian attack on Greece in 1940 brought Alexandros into the open as an outspoken supporter of the Greek cause in spite of the presence in Syria of an Italian Armistice Commission and in spite of the pro-Axis leanings of the French Vichy authorities. As he supported the Greeks, so he supported the Allied cause under the same circumstances. The traditional Russian support enjoyed by the Orthodox Church in Syria having ceased in 1917, the Orthodox community under Alexandros has drawn nearer to the Moslem Syrian Government and, on the whole further away from the Latin Christian community which enjoyed the protection of the French Mandatory. Alexandros maintains relations with the Anglican Church both in Jerusalem and in England. When the Government of the U.S.S.R. acknowledged the Russian Orthodox Church in 1941-42 he began a correspondence with the Patriarch Sergei, and attended the election ceremonies in Moscow of the Patriarch in January 1945. In 1950 was given honorary membership of the Theological Faculty at Kiev by the Metropolitan of Leningrad. Alexandros seemed at one stage very susceptible to Soviet blandishments but displeased Moscow by accepting an invitation to attend the St. Paul 19th Centenary celebrations at Athens. Subsequently visited Moscow using his journey to Athens as justification for, and as evidence of, his impartiality. Whilst there, was induced to make statements against the West. Allegedly returned home with a large sum described as "revenues of Church property in Moscow."

7. Antaki, Naim

Born Aleppo 1900. Educated in American University, Beirut. Greek Orthodox. A lawyer, he formerly worked with Maître Louis Zaidé and was at one time Dean of the Order of Barristers at Aleppo. Has visited India. Secretary to the Syrian delegation in Paris for the conclusion of the Franco-Syrian Treaty. On his return he became, in July 1937, Director for Foreign Affairs, but resigned in December 1937, being dissatisfied with the way in which he was ignored by his Moslem colleagues whenever important decisions were to be taken. Took no part in politics from fall of Nationalist Government (1939) until selected as Minister for Provisional Government of Ata Bey Ayoubi, in which he held Ministries for Foreign Affairs and Public Works (March 1943-August 1943). Elected Deputy for Damascus, whether he had officially transferred his domicile, in 1943, but for many months took no active part in politics as a result of temporary loss of eyesight through overwork. Minister of Finance, April 1945 to August, in Fares Khouzi's second Government (*q.v.*); member of Syrian delegation to United Nations Conference in San Francisco, April 1945. Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of Public Works in Saadullah Jabri's Government (*q.v.*), September 1945, but resigned December 1945. Minister for Foreign Affairs in Jamil Mardam's First Government, December 1946 until April 1947.

Is lawyer of Middle East Pipe Lines and of the Banque de Syrie. Was lawyer of Tapline but was not employed during the Zaim régime because he was said to get on badly with Husni Zaim (*q.v.*) whom he defended unsuccessfully when he was court-martialled in 1941. Successfully helped Middle East Pipe Lines to secure their way leave and refinery conventions in June 1949. Has been

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member of Syrian delegation at several United Nations Conferences and at many Arab League meetings. Attended Inter-Parliamentary Union Congress in Stockholm in September 1949 and in 1950 as a Syrian delegate. Formerly an ardent Nationalist, his views are now considerably more moderate although he retains his great admiration and friendship for Jamil Mardam. Very well educated, a tremendous worker and straightforward and sincere. Well disposed towards the British. Speaks excellent English and French.

8. Aphram I, Mar Ignatius

Syrian Orthodox (Jacobite) Patriarch of Antioch. Born 1884. Educated by the Dominicans at Mosul and received into the Roman Catholic Communion. Subsequently reverted to his original Church and was ordained in it. Became Patriarch with residence at Homs 1932. His community extends over the Middle East and India (whence he draws considerable funds). Very aware of his own importance and that of his Church. Like most Levant churchmen, mingles politics with religion.

9. Armanazi, Najib

Born about 1900. From Hama. Docteur en Droit ("à titre d'étranger") of Paris. Was private secretary to President Abed, and so anathema to Taj ed Din, who persuaded de Martel to oblige Abed to get rid of him. Appointed private secretary to President Atassi in 1937. On the resignation of President Atassi (July 1939) remained unemployed until appointed Secretary-General to President Quwatli, August 1943. Is brother-in-law of Jamil Mardam. Appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to Great Britain, Poland and Czechoslovakia, January 1945. Syrian representative on Preliminary Committee for United Nations Organisation and member of Syrian delegation to United Nations Organisation meeting in London, November 1945; appointed Minister to Sweden September 1947. He is not generally considered to have made a success of his mission in London and was recalled in June 1949. Appointed Syrian Minister to India in March 1950. Appointed minister to Turkey in March 1952. His wife is Colonel Shishakli's cousin.

10. Arslan, Adil Amir

Born about 1890. A Druse from the Lebanon (brother of Shekib Arslan, *q.v.*). Was pro-Turk in the War of 1914-18 and held a Kaimakamship in the Lebanon. Member of the Party of Independence 1919-20. Took an active part in the rebellion of 1925-26 and was condemned to death by the French. Amnestied in 1937. Expelled from Egypt in 1931 after anti-Italian agitations. Lived for some years in Iraq. Accompanied Syrian Prime Minister to Paris in 1937 to discuss ratification of Franco-Syrian Treaty, and subsequently returned to Syria, where he received a warm welcome. Has several times visited the United Kingdom, where he has business interests and where he was connected with Arab centre. Figured on the Palestine Black List (1937 and 1939). Worked with von Hentig and Roser from beginning of year 1941 to arrival of Allies in Syria, June 1941, when he fled to Turkey, where he is believed to have maintained contact with Syria. Is stated to have tried to put Druses against the Allies. In October 1941 became head of "Free Syrian Government" created by Vichy. Returned to Syria after the intervention of the President of the Republic in 1945 with the Allied Security authorities; appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to Brazil January 1946 but did not proceed. Minister of Education in Saadullah Jabri's third Government June 1946. Minister of Education in Jamil Mardam's first Government December 1946 to October 1947. Member of Syrian Delegation to London Palestine

B 2

Conference in autumn of 1946 and to United Nations Palestine discussions September 1947. Deputy for Jaulan 1947.

Member of Syrian delegation to United Nations Assembly in Paris in 1948. Was invited by Husni Zaim to form a Government in March 1949 following *coup d'État* but did not succeed. Appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister on 17th April, 1949, in Colonel Zaim's first Government, but disagreed with Zaim's readiness to talk with the Israelis, resigned on 25th June, 1949. Nominated Minister to Angola in July 1949 but has not yet left. After death of Zaim published in a Beirut paper a series of revelations about his former master.

Is a distinguished-looking and widely travelled person but retains many of the characteristics of his Druse ancestry—unreliability, cunning and outbursts of bad temper. Appointed Syrian Minister to Turkey in October 1949. He left Ankara in January 1952, his departure probably being hastened by Turkish press accusations that he had been concerned in the organisation of an anti-Turkish demonstration in Aleppo, and by simultaneous Syrian press attacks on him for a statement he allegedly made to *Al-Ahram* criticising Egypt's rejection of the Middle East Defence Plan.

11. Asaf, Amin Abu, Lieutenant-Colonel

A Druse born in 1910 at Soueida. In 1949 he was promoted lieutenant-colonel and in 1951 given command of the 1st Brigade on the Israeli Front. In June 1952 he relinquished command of the 1st Brigade at Quneitra and was appointed Commander of the 5th Liwa at Deir-oz-Zor. He has had twenty-two years' continuous service. Is not trusted by Colonel Shishakli who is afraid to get rid of him because of his large Druse following in the Syrian army.

He is an unprincipled opportunist and a thug with little personality.

He played a leading part in three *coups d'État*—Zaim's in March 1949; Hinnawi's in August 1949 and Shishakli's in December 1949.

12. Assaf, Sabri

Born Damascus 1901. Sunni Moslem. Took law degree in University of Damascus.

Being of Nationalist outlook, joined Nationalist Youth Movement and became its leader in 1940. Active in formation and control of Iron Shirts Movement until 1937, when it was disbanded. Joined up with Shukri Quwatli's *Iskiklal* Party and became his principal lieutenant in 1940. Under Vichy régime was anti-Allied, and organised in May 1941. Committee for Defence of Iraq (*i.e.*, pro-Rashid Ali). Arrested by Allies in February 1941 and interned at Rashaya. Released March 1943, elected Deputy for Damascus that year. Was a leading member of the League of National Action, which exercised considerable influence in Damascus and on which the President of the Republic placed considerable reliance.

Minister of Interior in Fares Khouri's second Government (*q.v.*) April to August 1945. Minister of Justice in Fares Khouri's third Government, August-September 1945. Minister of Justice and Acting Minister of Education in Saadullah Jabri's second Government, September 1945 to April 1946. Minister of Interior and Minister of Health in Saadullah Jabri's third Government, April-December 1946. As Minister of Interior showed himself ready to take strong action to prevent disorders and to suppress anti-Government activity. Elected deputy for Damascus in 1947. Secretary-General of the National Party. Pretended to co-operate with the late Husni Zaim in 1949 but in reality worked against him. Lay low towards the end of Zaim's régime

but after Zaim's fall came out into the open again as an active worker for the National Party. He is unmarried, and drinks and gambles heavily.

13. Assioun, Fathalla

Born 1899. Educated at the Frères School and the French School of Law, Aleppo. A well-known Aleppo lawyer of the Armenian Catholic Community. A moderate member of the National *blocc* and a supporter of Saadullah Jabri. Deputy for Aleppo in 1936 and again in 1943. On the resignation of Naim Antaki (*q.v.*) from Saadullah Bey's second Government was appointed Minister of Public Works, January until April 1946. Minister for Public Works again in Hashim Atassi's Cabinet of August 1949. A somewhat colourless individual with a reputation for probity and high principles.

Resigned from National Party in September 1949. Elected to Constituent Assembly in November 1949 as member of the Popular Party. Appointed Minister of Health in the Cabinet formed by Khalid al Azm in December 1949. Resigned with the rest of the Cabinet in May 1950. Again Minister of Health under Hassan Hakim (*q.v.*) from August to November 1951 and under Ma'rif Dawalibi (*q.v.*), 28th to 29th November, 1951.

14. Atassi, Adnan

Born Homs about 1905. Sunni Moslem. Son of Hashem Atassi (*q.v.*). Lawyer. During Nationalist Government was appointed Syrian Vice-Consul and attached for instruction to French Consulate, Istanbul. Married a Turkish lady. Elected Deputy for Homs 1943 and again 1947, and President of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Syrian Chamber. Minister Plenipotentiary to France and Belgium, January 1945 to March 1946. Minister of Justice and Public Works in Jamil Mardam's First Government, December 1946 to June 1947. Represented Syrian Chamber of Deputies at the International Parliamentary Conference at Geneva, September 1945. At one time suspected of pro-Axis activities and was known to be in frequent contact with the Grand Mufti during the latter's residence at Versailles. A prominent member of the Parliamentary Constitutional Party. Intelligent and well educated and was one of the leading Deputies in opposition to Shukri Quwatli's régime. Sent as Minister to Paris in 1949 and headed Syrian Delegation to Lausanne talks with Israel under auspices of Palestine Conciliation Commission in the same year.

15. Atassi, Faidi

Born about 1905. Son of former Mufti of Homs and cousin of Hashem al Atassi (*q.v.*). Educated in France (law). Had no political career, but was Chief of Municipality of Homs. Became Minister of Education in the Hassam al Hakim Government on its formation in September 1941, but resigned early in March 1942 in pique. Chosen to be Minister of Justice, Education, Social Affairs in Provisional Government at Ata Bey Ayoubi (March 1943-August 1943). Weak character and very boastful, being over proud of his education. Returned to his job as Head of the Municipality, Homs, until 1946, when he resigned. Deputy for Homs, 1947.

Invited by Husni Zaim to form a Government following *coup d'État* of March 1949 but refused to take office as Minister of Education when his attempts failed. Accepted post of Minister of National Economy in Hashim Atassi's Cabinet of August 1949. Elected to the Constituent Assembly in November 1949 as a member of the Popular Party. Minister of Justice in the Cabinet formed by Khalid al Azm in December 1949. Resigned in May 1950. Chairman of Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Deputies 1950-51. Minister of Interior under Nazim Qudsi (*q.v.*), 23rd to 27th March, and

Minister for Foreign Affairs under Hassan Hakim (*q.v.*), 9th August to 10th November, 1951. In the latter capacity he made a speech in Parliament attacking the Four-Power Middle East Defence proposals and resigned after quarrelling with the Prime Minister on this issue, thereby precipitating the fall of the Government.

16. Atassi, Hashim

Born about 1865. Good landed family. Prime Minister and President of the Constituent Assembly under Feisal, and President of the Constituent Assembly of 1928. Went to Mecca to be one of the three mediators in conflict between Imam Yahya and Ibn Saud. Succeeded Hanano as leader of the Syrian Nationalist *blocc* in January 1936. Led the Syrian delegation that went to Paris in March 1936 to negotiate a Franco-Syrian treaty after the disturbances of January-March 1936. A Nationalist who tempered courage with discretion. With the Syrian delegation in Paris his moderating and soothing influence was of great assistance to the successful conclusion of the treaty negotiations. Elected President of the Syrian Republic 21st December, 1936. On his election as President he resigned the leadership of the Nationalist Party, which was taken over by Shukri Quwatli. As President showed the same dignified tact and restraining influence as he had done during the treaty negotiations. His influence over the Nationalist Party grew less, however, as the Nationalist Government took the bit more firmly between its teeth. Resigned with the fall of the Nationalist Government on 7th July, 1939, and retired to his property at Homs, where he had built himself a pleasant villa during his tenure of office. Had conversations with General Dentz about resuming office in March 1941 and with General Catroux in September 1941 and again in March 1943, but on each occasion without result. Did not participate in 1943 elections and did not stand for the presidency. He began to be regarded as a respectable old man of moderate opinions, but somewhat *passé*. During the Cabinet crisis of December 1948 was invited but failed to form a Government. After the *coup d'État* by the late Colonel Hinnawi of 14th August, 1949, formed a provisional coalition Cabinet. A figure-head rather than a leader. Elected temporary Head of State by the Constituent Assembly in December 1949, pending the drawing up of a new Constitution. Elected President of the Republic on 5th September, 1950, the day when the new Constitution was formally adopted and the Constituent Assembly became the Chamber of Deputies. Retired to his property at Homs after Colonel Shishakli's *coup d'État* of 29th November, 1951.

17. Atrash, Hassan Amir

Born about 1908. Head of the House of Acre, the leading house of the Atrash family. Was Mohalif of Jebel Druse until he was appointed Minister of Defence in Husni Barazi's Government (April 1942 to January 1943), taking the place occupied by his uncle, Abdul Ghaffar Pasha, until the old man's death in March 1942. Was again Minister of Defence in Jamil Ulshi's Government (January 1943 to March 1943). Deputy for Soueida 1943 and president of Defence Committee of Syrian Chamber, but placed on reserve in December 1947. Re-appointed Mohalif of Jebel Druse (April 1943) and resigned from the Chamber. The full integration of Jebel Druse in the Syrian Republic in 1945 was largely due to his influence. In May 1945 he sponsored the mutiny of the Groupement Druse against their French officers and n.c.o.s, to whom he gave sanctuary in his house. He considers that the Syrian Government are not sufficiently appre-

ciative of the "leading rôle" the Druse have played both in 1925 and 1945 against the French. Amir Hassan is a typical Druse. He is ill-educated, stubborn, ambitious and avaricious. Despite his pretence of being pro-British, he did nothing to help the Allies during the Syrian campaign: and nothing to hinder. He can, however, sometimes be "jollied" into favourable action. Flirted with the Nationalists, with the French and with King Abdullah. His following in the Jebel Druse was split by Shukri Quwatli in 1948 and his control is no longer absolute.

18. Atrash, Soltan Bin Hamud Pasha

Born about 1875. (Soltan is a name, not a title.) Family originally from Rashaya, migrated to Jebel Druse in 1860's and became paramount Druse family there. Soltan is the head of the Kraye house, which is junior to the Acre house, headed by Emir Hassan (*q.v.*). Under the Turks, Soltan adopted wary tactics and avoided a conflict. In 1925-26 took a leading part in the Druse revolt and became a centre round which the various insurgent leaders moved. When the revolt was crushed Soltan Pasha fled to Transjordan with his closest adviser, the Christian Oqla Qutami. There he found sanctuary, although condemned to death in absence by French court-martial. In 1937 returned to the Jebel but took no active part in politics, leaving Emir Hassan to dominate the Jebel. He retired to Kraiye, content to live on his past glory, which remains considerable. During the campaign of 1941 took no part. In March 1942, after the death of Abdul Ghaffar Pasha el Atrash, at that time Minister of National Defence, was offered the Ministry of Defence, but refused it. Soltan Pasha and Oqla Qutami were awarded pensions for life by the Syrian Government as patriots and heroes of 1925-26 revolt. Ill-educated, of small intelligence and with a reputation for meanness, he is crafty, and managed to inspire in the insurgents of 1925 confidence in his leadership. He remains the most important Druse. Is inclined to be pro-British and was anti-French. He feels, however, that the British let him down, as they told him not to intrigue against the Fighting French (and he abstained from doing so), but allowed the French to intrigue against him, undermining his influence in the Jebel Druse.

During the past few years he has on several occasions openly showed his dissatisfaction with the Damascus Government on the grounds that insufficient deference is paid to him and his past record.

19. Azm, Abdurrahman

Born 1916 at Hama. Son of a wealthy landowner. Educated at the American University of Beirut he is a graduate of the Jesuit School of Law, Beirut. Related to the family of Khalid al Azm. Elected to Parliament in 1947 and to the Constituent Assembly in November 1949, as an Independent. Appointed Minister of Finance in the Cabinet formed by Khalid al Azm in December 1949. Serious-minded, intelligent and a hard worker. A bitter enemy of Akram Hourani. Resigned with the rest of the Cabinet in May 1950. Re-appointed Minister of Finance under Khalid al Azm (*q.v.*), 27th March to 30th July, 1951, and again under Ma'rif Dawalibi (*q.v.*), 28th to 29th November, 1951. Imprisoned by Colonel Shishakli and released in April 1952.

20. Azm, Khalid

Born about 1900. Son of Mohamed Pasha al Azm. Did not at first take an active part in politics, except an occasional intervention in agricultural matters. Member of the Municipal Council. Managing director of the National Cement Factory.

Appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister of Justice in the Bukhari Cabinet, March to May 1939.

Under the influence of the Italian Disarmament Commission, was appointed by Vichy French (General Dentz) on 2nd April, 1941, as "Chef d'Etat" and Minister of Interior. His régime lasted until September 1941, when it was replaced by "Independent" Syrian Government with Shaikh Taj ed Din as President. During Syrian campaign he collaborated closely with Vichy French to preserve order in Damascus. During whole period of office he showed himself to be under the influence of the Nationalists—especially of Shukri Quwatli. Deputy for Damascus 1943 and Minister of Finance in Saadullah Jabri's Government (August 1943—October 1944). Minister of Finance and Ravitaillement in Fares Khouri's first Government October 1944 to April 1945. Minister of Finance and Defence in Fares Khouri's third Government August to September 1945. Minister of National Economy and Justice in Saadullah Jabri's third Government, April 1946. Was acting Prime Minister on several occasions and resigned in December 1946. Appointed Minister to France, Belgium and Switzerland, May 1947. Syrian representative on Franco-Levant States financial negotiations December to February 1946-47.

Was recalled to Syria by Shukri Quwatli in November 1948 to help solve the Cabinet crisis which followed the resignation of Jamil Mardam and took office as Prime Minister. Under his Government, which lasted till March 1949, a forward economic policy was pursued. He was arrested by Husni Zaim but quickly released. After the second *coup d'Etat* of August 1949, in which Zaim was executed, he became Minister of Finance.

A rich landowner, very pompous, conceited and overbearing. A bit of a bully, but like all bullies, if stood up to, caves in. He is intelligent, well-educated, and more widely read and has wider interests than most of his compatriots. Can be very obstinate and stuffy, however. Has ambitions to become President of the Republic, but might be handicapped in this by his present wife, who was formerly a cabaret dancer. Suspected at one time of pro-German sympathies, but probably incorrectly; he has shown himself ready to co-operate with the Western Powers, particularly the French. Became Prime Minister in December 1949, shortly after the "disciplinary action" taken by Lieut.-Colonel Adib Shihakli against Sami Hinnawi and Asad Tallas. Resigned with the rest of the Cabinet in May 1950. Formed Cabinet of Independents on 27th March, 1951; resigned 30th July.

21. Babil, Nassuh

Born Damascus about 1905, of obscure parentage. Arrested with Ajlani (q.v.) in 1938 for his support of Shahbandar against Mardam. Remained supporter of Dr. Shahbandar until latter was assassinated in July 1940, when he and Fuad Qodmani became leaders of Shahbandar Party. He and his party failed in 1943 elections and the party disintegrated. He is proprietor of the important Damascus newspaper *El Ayam* and President of the Press Syndicate. Came under suspicion of the Syrian Government of being in touch with the French regarding the setting up of a quisling Government during the bombardment of Damascus in May 1945. Visited the United Kingdom in December 1946.

A mediocre individual who, however, has the respect of a large section of the Syrian press.

22. Bannud, Anwar Mahmood, Brigadier

A Moslem, son of a Turkish officer, born about 1900 in Aleppo. In 1949 became Inspector-General of the Army and later in the year was promoted

Deputy Chief of Staff and Chief of State. In 1951 he fell out of favour with Colonel Shishakli who posted him to Ankara as military, air and naval attaché. He has so far served twenty-seven years in the army.

He was popular with his brother officers owing to the fact that he is both lazy and not a strict disciplinarian. He has no independent opinions but is known to be anti-Communist and in favour of the Fertile Crescent. He is discontented in his present employment and would like to return with his family to Syria and live in retirement. However, Shishakli has no intention of allowing him to do this at present. He is a relative of Nazim Qudsi (q.v.).

23. Barazi, Husni

Born about 1882. Son of Sulaiman Agha Barazi, a rich landed Kurdish family of Hama. Minister of the Interior under Damad, 1926. Deported on suspicion of assisting rebels in July 1926. Member of Constituent Assembly, 1928. Opposed by Nationalists in elections of 1932 and was not elected. He was, however, appointed Minister of Education in Taj ed Din's Government in March 1934, and resigned with Shaikh Taj in February 1936. Appointed Mohafiz of Alexandretta in January 1937, he sought to prove his attachment to his new Nationalist masters by intriguing with the Arab parties in the Sanjak against the Turks and the Mandatory, but was ejected in November 1937. Appointed Mohafiz of Damascus in March 1942. On fall of Hassan el Hakim Government (April 1942) was appointed by Shaikh Taj ed Din President of the Council of Ministers and Minister of the Interior. Succeeded Faiz Khouri as President of the Commission Supérieure of the Wheat Office, in which capacity he promised to secure large quantities of wheat, but did not succeed. Quarrelled with Shaikh Taj ed Din, posing as Syrian patriot, thinking he had the support of his colleagues. Matters came to a head in January 1943, when all his colleagues resigned and he was obliged to retire.

During the Cabinet crisis of November 1948 endeavoured to return to politics as a virtual dictator. Was appointed by Husni Zaim for a short time in 1949 to be Mohafiz of Aleppo and Deputy Military Governor of Syria and ran his district autocratically but well. Resigned owing to rivalry with Ziam, whom he thought of challenging for the presidency. Was later imprisoned by Ziam for a short time and might have been executed had Ziam not preceded him.

A man of some strength of character, but devoid of morals and intelligence. Intriguer and accused in the past of trafficking in hashish. Until he assumed office was heavily in debt. Before the visit to Syria of the Anglo-American Commission of Enquiry on Palestine in 1946 he volunteered to His Majesty's Consul, Damascus, to testify before the Commission in favour of the Jews. Professes to be well-disposed towards Britain. Elected to the Constituent Assembly in November 1949 as an Independent. A bitter enemy of Akram Hourani (q.v.). Fundamentally unreliable, he has since the end of 1949 posed as the bitter opponent of the Army's interference in Syrian politics but this did not prevent him from remaining on good terms with the military clique for a time. Imprisoned by Colonel Shishakli after his *coup d'Etat* of 29th November. Released March 1952.

24. Barnuda, Rashad

Age about 43. Moslem. Member of a leading Aleppo family. Deputy in 1947 but failed in the elections for the Constituent Assembly in 1949. A prominent lawyer and now President of the Aleppo Lawyers' Syndicate. One of the original members

of the Popular Party. Minister of Interior in the Cabinet formed by Nazim Qudsi on 4th June, 1950. Resigned with the rest of the Cabinet on 9th March, 1951. Minister of Interior again under Hassan Hakim (q.v.), August to November 1951.

25. Biddash, Khalid

Born about 1910 in Damascus, of Kurdish origin of a family named Kutrash, Sunni Moslem. Educated in Damascus, where he studied philosophy. Became secretary of Communist Party in Damascus, 1928. The Communist Party was persecuted by the French and in 1934, following the distribution of Communist leaflets, was suppressed, Biddash being condemned to several years' imprisonment. He escaped to Russia, where he attended the Oriental School of Propaganda. He now claims that, while in Russia, he met Stalin. In 1936 went to Paris and obtained a special amnesty through the Syrian delegation which was negotiating the Franco-Syrian Treaty. Returned to Syria in January 1937 and resumed leadership of the Communist Party. Again went into hiding in Damascus at the outbreak of war when Communist Party was suppressed, remaining there until Germany attacked Russia (June 1941). After attempts to reach an understanding with Shukri Quwatli (q.v.) by which he should be included on the latter's electoral list in 1943, Biddash stood as an independent candidate and failed. He failed also in the 1947 elections. For the last five years he has devoted his energies to organising the activities of the Communist Party, and is known to be in constant touch with members of the Soviet Legation. Stated to be owner of Communist paper *Saut ash Shaab*, of Beirut. Popular among the working classes and a good speaker. Said to receive substantial subsidies from Russia. Speaks Arabic, Kurdish, Russian, French. Ambitious, and prepared to make trouble. Tried to stand as an Independent candidate for the Constituent Assembly in November 1949, but his application was refused. Married Wissal Farha, a schoolteacher and a Communist, in 1951. A strong, capable leader who remains as dangerous and elusive as ever.

26. Bitur, Salahuddin

Born 1912. Unmarried. Graduated in law at the Sorbonne, Paris. On his return to Syria in 1935 he worked for seven years as a teacher. During that time he acted as lieutenant to Michel Aflaq (q.v.) in building up the Ba'ath el Arabi Party, of which he is still secretary-general. Once called himself a Communist but now claims to have disavowed Marxism on the grounds that it is too materialistic, Unimpressive and xenophobic.

27. Chatila, Khalid, Dr.

About 45 years of age. Born in Damascus. Secondary education in Syria. Later studied and obtained doctorate in philosophy from Paris as a result of a scholarship provided by French authorities. On returning to Syria worked in Ministry of Education.

Married a relative of Khalid al Azm (q.v.) in 1949, through whose influence he was appointed as counsellor at Syrian Legation in Paris.

Appointed Secretary-General of the Presidency by Muhsin Barazi after Zaim's 1949 *coup d'Etat*, a post he has held ever since.

28. Daham al Hadi, Shaikh

Born 1895. Bedouin chief and head of the Shammar Khrossa. Disputes the leadership of all the Shammar of Syria with his cousin, Meizar Abdul Muhsen, who actually heads the Shammar confederation. Also claims hereditary leadership of the Iraqi Shammar, from which he was evicted by the

British. He is therefore bitterly jealous of Sheikh Slook and continually contrives to undermine his position. Appointed Deputy of the Jezirah tribes in 1936. Exiled in 1942 for obstructing road constructions and wheat purchase. In spite of his being in exile, was elected Deputy in 1943 for Jezirah tribes and in 1947; returned to Syria 1944.

A proud and truculent sheikh, ignorant of his limitations and of world conditions. Elected to the Constituent Assembly in November 1949. Said to be sympathetic to Popular Party.

29. Dandashi, Ali Abdul Karim

Born 1905 at Tel Kalakh. Member of the Danatch clan. A Sunni Moslem. Studied at the Islamic College in Beirut till 1928. Joined the scout movement in 1923 and has remained associated with it. In 1937 he took a group of Syrian scouts to the jamboree in Holland, travelling by way of the Balkans, Austria and Germany, returning through France and Italy. On this occasion he stayed for some time in Berlin and Potsdam, where he associated with Syrians in Germany, notably one of the Dalati brothers, who are associated with him in the scout movement. From 1937 has devoted most of his time to scouting and was elected Chief Scout in November 1941. Is associated with the League of National Action, which was founded by his cousin and of which his colleague in the scout movement, Dr. Rushdi Jabi (q.v.), is leading member. His arrest was ordered by the French in February 1942, but the order was cancelled at the end of March, and, shortly after, he paraded at the head of the scouts at the review of the Syrian gendarmerie.

Dandashi played an important part in the dispute between the scout movement and the Ministry of Youth and Propaganda under Munir Ajlani (q.v.), opposing Government control of the scout movement. After the Allied occupation showed himself willing to co-operate and took part with his scouts in passive defence exercises. Energetic and a disciplinarian. Elected to the Constituent Assembly in November 1949, as a member of the Popular Party.

30. Dawalibi, Ma'arif

Born 1907 in Aleppo. Lawyer. A graduate of the Syrian University, he also holds a Paris University Doctorate of Law. From 1936 to 1938 he was a member of the National Party and was active in both Aleppo and Damascus. During the war was in France at the time of the German occupation and was in close touch with the ex-Mufti Haj Amin Hussaini, Rushid Ali al Keilani and the other pro-German Arabs. Collaborated with the Vichy Government. Helped the ex-Mufti to escape from France in 1946. Elected to Parliament in 1947, he left the National Party and joined the Popular Party in 1948. Member of the Moslem Brotherhood. Elected to the Constituent Assembly in November 1949. Appointed Minister of National Economy in the Cabinet formed by Khalid al Azm on 27th December, 1949. Resigned with the rest of the Cabinet in May 1950.

While in Cairo in April, 1950, made a statement indicating that the Arabs would prefer to become a Soviet Republic rather than be Judaized as a result of American pressure. This statement caused something of a sensation and was the signal for a noisy demand in Syria, chiefly by the Moslem Brotherhood, for a rapprochement with the Soviet Union. Although the statement did him harm in responsible Syrian circles it boosted his popularity among the masses. Minister of National Economy under Nazim Qudsi (q.v.), 23rd to 27th March, 1951. After the fall of Hassan Hakim's (q.v.) Government on 10th November he managed to form a Government, at the second attempt, on 28th November, but on 29th November its members were imprisoned by

Colonel Shishakli. Released in April 1952. Refused to take the oath of non-participation in politics as a civil servant (lecturer at Syrian University) and was accordingly dismissed in May 1952.

31. Diab, Munir

A Damascene. About 40 years old. A member of a family well known in Syrian commerce and whose primary interests are in the local textile industry. Appointed Minister of National Economy on 9th June, 1952.

32. Farra, Jamal

Born 1911. Moslem. Obtained a diploma for electrical engineering in France. In 1940 became an Inspector of the Ministry of Education and in 1945 Director of Secondary Schools. Appointed Acting Secretary-General of the Ministry of Education in 1947 and Secretary-General in 1948. In that year he was also a member of the Syrian National Commission for U.N.E.S.C.O. In June 1949 was appointed Chargé d'Affaires in Brussels and in October 1950 Acting Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Has an ingratiating manner which at first tends to conceal an obvious lack of sincerity. Fundamentally he dislikes all foreigners. A climber, who will support anyone whom he thinks will help him in the upward path in Syrian affairs. Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs after Colonel Shishakli's *coup d'Etat* on 29th November, reverting to the post of Secretary-General on the appointment of a Government on 9th June, 1952.

33. Fattayeh, Ahmed

Born 1912. Deir-az-Zor. Obtained a degree in Paris. Holds degree in law from Syrian University. Secretary-General of Ministry of Education. His career has been devoted to education and he has not taken part in politics.

34. Ghannam, Muir

Native of Homs. Lawyer. Graduate of Syrian University. Appointed Minister of Justice on 9th June, 1952.

35. Haffar, Lutfi

Born Damascus 1888 of a family of well-established merchants. Minister of Public Works under the Damad, 1926, and deported for Nationalist sympathies some months later. Member of the Constituent Assembly, 1928. Accepted post as administrator of Ain Fijeh waterworks, 1931. Deputy in 1932 and again in 1936 when he was elected vice-president of the Chamber of Deputies. Minister of Finance in the second Jamil Mardam Cabinet (July 1937 to February 1939). Prime Minister, 23rd February to 14th March, 1939. Implicated in the murder of Dr. Shabandar in July 1940, and fled to Bagdad. Returned to Syria after the charge against him had been dropped and the Government of Directors replaced by the moderate Nationalist Government of Khaled Bey el Azm (*q.v.*) in April 1941. Deputy for Damascus 1943 and again in 1947 and Minister of Interior in Saadullah Jabri's Government (August 1943–October 1944), but resented the latter's interference in his Department. Minister of Interior in Fares Khouri's third Government, August–September 1945. Minister of Interior in Saadullah Jabri's second Government, September 1945 to April 1946. Although practically illiterate is interested in the newspaper *Al Inshaa*, which is nominally owned and directed by his cousin, Wajih el Haffar.

Not an extreme Nationalist, but has a lengthy record of political activity in connexion with

Palestine—assisted Nebih el Azmi to organise the Arab Conference at Bludan in 1935 and was appointed chairman of the Syrian Committee for the Defence of Palestine. Not a strong personality though he was an important member of the Nationalist bloc and has been president of the Damascus branch of the National Party since 1948. A good second fiddler. Suffers from heart trouble.

36. Hajjo, Agha Hassan

Born about 1898 near Mardine, Turkey. Head of Haverkan tribe of Kurds which moved into Syria about 1922. No specific education, but reads and writes Kurdish, Arabic and Turkish. With his late father took prominent part in Separatist Movement in the Jezirah. Resides at Hassetché. Was pro-Ally and co-operative during the war; elected Deputy for Kamishli 1943 and in 1947, but does not enjoy the confidence of the National Party owing to his former connexion with the French.

37. Hakim, Hassan

Born Damascus about 1886. Was an Inspector of Finance and later Director of Posts and Telegraphs in Faisal's Syrian Government of 1918–20. He was held responsible for delay in sending off Faisal's reply to General Gouraud's ultimatum in July 1920. (It was the absence of a reply that provided the excuse for General Gouraud to order French troops to advance on Damascus.) Exiled by the French but had fled to Egypt and later went to Iraq. Then he obtained an appointment as manager of the Arab Bank's Jaffa branch. Amnestied in 1937, he returned to Damascus and, as a loyal Nationalist, was appointed Director-General of Wakf. Minister of Education in Bukhari Cabinet, March to May 1939. Later became Director of Government Agricultural Bank. In September 1941 became President of Council and Minister of Finance in "Independent" Syria under the presidency of Sheikh Taj ed Din, as proclaimed by French. Quarrelled with President over latter's financial requests and with French over non-granting of various concessions of form to independence. Because of his rather stubborn and limited capacity was on bad terms with his colleagues, whom he was unable to pull together. Was undoubtedly pro-British, but was very indiscreet in falling under the influence of unworthy counsellors. He gave his enemies a chance to attack him because he openly proclaimed himself as opposed to the feudal landlords and because, although materially honest, he provoked laws to benefit himself in small ways. In April 1942 he was forced to resign in rather an unpleasant manner, after defying the President, and reverted to former employment as Director of the National (Syrian) Agricultural Bank until July 1944, when he retired. Subsequently criticised the actions of the President of the Republic and the Government in letters and memoranda and was outspokenly in favour of a Hashimite monarchy in Syria. Applied to visit London at the same time as the Emir Abdullah early in 1946, but was not granted a visa as his visit did not come under any category admissible at the time and it was not considered desirable to make any exception. Failed in 1947 elections. Elected as an Independent to the Constituent Assembly in November, 1949. Appointed Minister of State in Nazim Qudsi's Cabinet in September 1950. Resigned in October. A close friend of Munir Ajlani (*q.v.*). Has openly advocated that Syria should join the Western camp against Russia. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance from August to November 1951 when he resigned following a difference of view with his Minister for Foreign Affairs, Faïd Atassi (*q.v.*) about the Middle East Defence Pact.

38. Halabi, Fuad

Born Damascus about 1905. Sunni Moslem. Married to an Atassi of Homs; formerly civil judge in Damascus and Homs. Appointed Acting Mohafiz of Homs 1942, confirmed in October and maintained in office by Saadullah Jabri's Government. Reputed honest as judge, and showed himself an astute and capable administrator. After his definite appointment as Mohafiz, however, he displayed political ambitions and showed himself reluctant to take a strong line when notables were concerned. Appointed early in 1946 as Administrative Inspector at Ministry of Interior. From December 1946 Director of Tribal Affairs but was sacked in 1949. 1951: appointed Governor of Jebel Druze, a post which he held for a few months only. Appointed Director of the P.T.T. in 1952.

39. Hariri, Wahbi

Born in Aleppo in 1907, received a secondary school education. Until 1939 was a small contractor and businessman in Aleppo, with connexions in Turkey. During the war he very rapidly increased his fortune contracting for the French and British armies, and building what is now the largest textile factory in Syria. Gave the price of a Spitfire to the British in 1942. Elected Deputy in 1943 on Saadullah Jabri's list and in 1947 on the list of the Parliamentary Popular Party. Appointed Minister of Finance in Jamil Mardam's Government in October 1947, is on good terms with Jamil. He is a clever businessman with few scruples, but has no knowledge of Government finance or of currency matters. He drinks heavily, and is disposed to talk frankly with the British with whom he believes his commercial interests lie.

Alleged to be a strong early supporter of Colonel Zaim after the *coup d'Etat*: his newspaper *Alif Ba* was consistently pro-Zaim. His financial dealings during the Zaim period were investigated by a special committee and his property was sequestered. He, himself, vanished. Subsequently, investigations "established his innocence" but in fact he is said to have refunded some of his ill-gotten gains to the Government. Now back in Aleppo.

40. Haroun, Taufiq

Member of a prominent Lattakia family. Graduate of the School of Law at Damascus University. Appointed Minister of Public Works on 9th June, 1952.

41. Hatim, Anwar

Born 1910. An Aleppine Christian educated in France, graduate of law from Paris University. Teacher of French Literature at the Tajhiz School, Damascus, 1933–36. Secretary to Prime Minister 1937–39. Assistant Chief of Diwan at Prime Minister's Office 1939–42. Director of Propaganda and Social Affairs April 1942–April 1943. Chief of Service in Prime Minister's Office April 1943–May 1945. Director of Prime Minister's Office May 1945. Appointed Second Counsellor at Ministry for Foreign Affairs March 1946 in addition to his other post. August 1947 sent on mission to London and was guest of British Council for a month. Intelligent. A supporter of Jamil Mardam and a friend of Munir Ajlani, he has frequently shown himself to be well-disposed towards the British. Now combines the posts of secretary-general of the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers and director of the Prime Minister's Office.

42. Hindieh, Grégoire

Armenian Catholic Archbishop of Aleppo. Born 1895. Educated in the Armenian Seminary in Rome. Member of a wealthy Aleppo family with

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political connexions. A brother was at one time Minister of Finance. Formerly known as a Franco-phile; after his brother's resignation from the Finance Ministry he became a vehement critic of the French Administration in Syria, and later became just as critical of the Syrian Nationalist Administration.

A prelate whose interests are more temporal than spiritual and who is not much trusted locally.

43. Hiraki, Hikmet

Born about 1895. Prominent Moslem landowner of Maaret-en-Noman (Aleppo region). No political career, but always friendly to the French. Is a farmer and on very good terms with the Bedouins of his district and with his own tenants. Became Minister of Ravitaillement in the Hassan al Hakim Government (September 1941 to April 1942), again in Husni Barazi's Government (April 1942 to January 1943) and again in Jamil Uishi's Government (January 1943 to March 1943). Was also appointed Assistant to Jamil Uishi as President of the Wheat Commission. Deputy 1943 for Maaret-en-Noman and again in 1947. Shrewd. Elected to the Constituent Assembly in November 1949.

Enemy of Akram Hourani (*q.v.*).

44. Honsi, Edmond

Born 1901. Son of Albert Homsy, educated A.U.B. Switzerland and England, private banker with interests in Egypt, who did lucrative business with Turks during the 1914 war. He is an important shareholder in the Banque de Syrie et du Liban. Was Syrian Minister of Finance (March to October 1936). Member of Syrian delegation for the conclusion of the Franco-Syrian Treaty in 1936. Elected Nationalist Deputy for Aleppo, December 1936. Took unofficial charge of the British Consulate at Aleppo during 1941 evacuation and has always been outspoken in his British sympathies. However he is apt to be influenced by his wife who is pro-French. Was made honorary Commander of the British Empire. April 1946 appointed Minister of Finance in Saadullah Jabri's third Government when he instituted investigation into irregularities in Finance Ministry. Failed in 1947 elections on President's list. Was appointed Syrian Minister to London in June 1949 by Husni Zaim and continues to hold that post. Is intelligent and pleasant, if somewhat indolent. Also accredited to Belgium.

45. Houbby, Saïd, Colonel

A Moslem, born in 1902. In 1946 became Director of the Deuxième Bureau and in 1949 he was appointed military attaché in Washington. In 1950 he became Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff and later that year was given command of the Syrian air force. In 1951 he left the air force and was made Commander of the Armoured Forces and in 1952 was, in addition, made Commander of the Southern Region.

He is a reserved but astute officer, slow but efficient and above the average in personality. He is a sick man as a result of a serious motor accident which injured his head.

He speak Arabic and French, but no English.

46. Hourani, Akram

Born Hama about 1915. Sunni Moslem. Lawyer. Extremist leader of Youth Party of Hama. Joined Iraqi revolution 1941 at head of a small number of young men; met German commission in Homs and Aleppo. Deputy 1943, and Secretary of Chamber of Deputies. Intelligent and has considerable influence over young men, including sons of notables, in spite of his anti-feudal views. Was engaged in active agitation against the Feudal Party (Ghaleb Azm, Abdul Qader Kailani (*q.v.*)) and escaped arrest together with Raif Milqi (*q.v.*) only by intervention

of the Prime Minister (February 1944). A leading member of the Constitutional Liberal Party and a most active critic of the Government. Proprietor and chief editor of *El Yaqza* first published May 1946—which from the first issue has adopted a violently anti-British attitude, and is notable even amongst Syrian newspapers for the inaccuracy of its news. Re-elected Deputy for Hama 1947. Member of Parliamentary Constitutional Party 1948. Actually fought for six weeks with volunteers in Palestine early 1948, and urged severe measures in Government. An intimate counsellor of Zaim in the early days of the *comp d'Etat* of March 1949 and is said to have been responsible for many of the reforms which were then initiated. Broke with Zaim and after the latter's death became Minister of Agriculture in Hashem Alassi's Cabinet of August 1949 in which he was the most dynamic member. A man with considerable drive but vain and irresponsible. Elected as an Independent to the Constituent Assembly in November 1949. Headed the group in the Assembly which strongly opposes Syro-Iraqi union and found powerful support among Army officers, notably Lieut.-Colonel Adib Shishakly (*q.v.*) with whom he threw in his lot. Appointed Minister of Defence in the Cabinet formed by Khalid al Azm in December 1949. In January 1950, formed his own radical-socialist party the "Arab Socialist Party." Resigned from the Cabinet in April 1950. Married early in 1951. He is rarely if ever seen in public; knows no foreign languages. Ambitious and ruthless. He has tried to rally all Left-wing elements to his party, and has turned a blind eye to the penetration of his party by known Communists. Though a former confrère of Colonel Shishakly, it appears that they have latterly become estranged and Hourani is temporarily in eclipse.

47. Hunzidi, Abdul Rahman

A member of a land-owning family of Deir-az-Zor. Has a French wife. Studied in France. Appointed Minister of Agriculture on 9th June, 1952.

48. Huraki, Ignatius

Born about 1900. Greek Orthodox Bishop of Hama. As usual with Levant ecclesiastics, more interested in politics than church matters and tries to get his finger in every pie. Supporter of Nationalist bloc, was elected vice-president of the Committee for the Defence of Palestine at the Arab Conference in Bludan 1937. At meeting at Aleppo (21st November, 1942) to commemorate Hanano, Nationalist hero, made a speech to the effect that there were no minorities. This roused uproar in the Christian and French circles. A speaker of repute, in July 1947 was sent by the Patriarch to Brazil, where he addressed ex-patriate Syrians.

Clever and unscrupulous.

49. Ishih, Nuri

Born about 1895. Educated at A.U.B. and Cirencester Agricultural College. Appointed by Saadullah Jabri's Government to be Director-General of Tribal Affairs (March 1944) on the cession of the Tribal Department by the French to the Syrians. Resigned November 1946. Elected Deputy for Damascus 1947, receiving highest number of votes cast, which made him aspire to the Presidency. Has spent a great deal of money on the improvement of his farm near Damascus. Was co-opted Minister of Agriculture in Husni Zaim's two Cabinets and worked hard to reform his Ministry. Well disposed towards Britain.

50. Jabbara, Hassan

Alawite. Born about 1897 at Alexandretta, where he was educated in the French Collège des Frères.

Worked in the Deutsche Palestina Bank and on the Bagdad Railway before the 1914 war. After the armistice of 1918 he supported the French, and in 1942 was appointed Director of the Finance Department in the Sanjak of Alexandretta. Went to Geneva in 1937 to assist the League of Nations experts in drawing up the statute of the sanjak. Supported the Alawite element in the sanjak, which he has done much to organise. Expelled from Alexandretta in August 1938 and appointed Director of Finance at Aleppo later in that year. Appointed Director-General of Finance by Khaled el Azm in April 1941 and combined this with the directorate of Supply for one year. Inspector of Trade Disputes, 1943; Minister of Ravitaillement in Fares Khouri's second Government April to August 1945. Minister of Ravitaillement in Fares Khouri's third Government August to October 1945. Minister of National Economy and acting Minister of Ravitaillement and Government Representative MIRA in Saadullah Jabri's second Government October 1945 to April 1946; acting Minister of Finance from December 1945. Reverted to Director-General of Finance and appointed Government representative on Supreme Council of Common Interests May 1946. Syrian representative (April 1947) on International Trade Organisation. Syrian delegate to Havana Conference on trade and employment November 1947. Appointed Secretary-General of Ministry of Finance March 1948. On several occasions represented Syria on Arab League Financial Committee. Being born in the Hatay, he bitterly resents its cession to Turkey, especially as the Turks confiscated his property there. Until outbreak of war was *persona non grata* to Turks. Was Minister of Finance in Khaled el Azm's Government of December 1948 and again in Husni Zaim's Government of April 1949. In this capacity was co-operative in obtaining signature and ratification of the Middle East Pipe Line conventions.

An able financier and believed to be honest, though he has been accused in the press of being party to financial irregularities in the Ministry of Finance. A timorous personality, although of stubborn character. Not liked on account of his coldness. Appointed Director-General of Syrian Customs in March 1950, after the dissolution of the Customs Union between Syria and the Lebanon. Minister of Finance under Nazim Qudsi (*q.v.*) from June to September 1950.

51. Jabri, Ihsan

Born Aleppo about 1885. Brother of the late Saadullah al Jabri. Deputy for Aleppo in the Parliament at Constantinople during the Turkish régime and for a time aide-de-camp to the Sultan. Returned to Aleppo after the war and proceeded to Damascus, where he was Chamberlain to King Faisal during the latter's short reign. Fled with King Faisal at the time of the French occupation of Damascus, first to Palestine and then to Iraq. In 1924 he was delegated by the Syrian Arabs to go to Geneva to uphold the cause of Syrian independence at the League of Nations in company with the Druse leader, the Emir Shakib Arslan. Sentenced by the French to permanent banishment from Syria and remained in Europe working for Syrian independence from 1924 to 1937. Amnestied in April 1937 and was Mohafiz of Latakia in November 1937 to April 1939. Was actively associated with bread strikes in Aleppo, March 1941. Arrested by the British in Aleppo in September 1942 as potentially dangerous, but released in September 1943. Failed in 1947 elections; president of the Aleppo branch of National Party 1948. An enthusiastic Nationalist of influence who still has personal ambitions.

52. Jabri, Majduddin

Born in 1910, son of Kemal Bey Jabri and nephew of Saadullah Bey Jabri; married to Hale, daughter of Ihsan Bey Jabri (brother of Saadullah Bey). Educated at Aleppo and for five years at Robert College, Istanbul. Spent three years, 1932 to 1935, in United States (B.A., Illinois University) where he studied engineering. Served for six years in the Public Works Department of the Palestine Government and seconded for service in Transjordan (1937-43). Secretary-General of Aleppo Municipality 1944-45 and President of the Municipality since July 1946. Took office as Minister of Public Works in Khaled el Azm's non-party Government of December 1948. Although invited by Husni Zaim to act as public works adviser he refused and was apparently against the régime. Also refused the post of Minister of Public Works in Hashim Atassi's Cabinet of August 1949. Well educated, practical, moderate and less susceptible to party and family influences than most Arabs. Devotes his spare time to exploiting his father's many estates. Speaks excellent English and good French; the main hope for the future of the Jabri family. Withdrew to Beirut at the end of 1949 and has apparently given up any idea of returning to Syrian politics. Much influenced by his wife.

53. Jazza, Kazem al.

Secretary-General, Ministry of Public Works. Civil engineer, studied and qualified (through a scholarship) in France. Appointed as an assistant in Dantascus Municipality.

Later appointed Director of Concessions Control Office. Returned to Ministry of Public Works, to his present post, during Hassan Hakim's Government in autumn of 1951.

Fifty-three years of age. Speaks French and some English. Married. An efficient and circumspect civil servant who has steered clear of politics. Well disposed to Britain.

54. Kahlali, Nuruddin

Born 1908 in Homs. Moslem. Educated at Robert College, Istanbul, where he obtained his B.Sc. in electrical engineering; later went to Illinois College, United States and graduated in Civil Engineering. On his return to Syria in 1929 he worked for two years as engineer with the Damascus Tramway and Electricity Company, and from 1931-34 was employed in a similar capacity with the Cement Company in Damascus.

He started his career as a Civil Servant in 1935 when he entered the Public Works Department as engineer for the Damascus Municipality, a position which he held until 1941. He was then appointed Chief of the Irrigation Department, and promoted to be Director of Irrigation in 1944. During that year he represented Syria at the International Air Conference at Chicago, and also accompanied the Syrian Delegation to the United Nations Organisation Conference in San Francisco in 1945.

He was Secretary of the Syrian Engineers' Association when it was founded in 1942. In 1947 he was appointed Director-General of the Ministry of Public Works and Communications, and in 1948 was promoted to Secretary-General of the Ministry.

Nuruddin Kahlali, who is regarded as the most qualified engineer in the Government service, is a hard worker and has devoted a good deal of time as technical adviser to the Government in connexion with the various Syrian economic development schemes, notably the Yarmouk Hydro-Electric Scheme. Appointed director of the Latakia Port Project in 1951.

Kahlali speaks fluent English, and reasonably good French.

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55. Kailani, Saadi (Shami Pir)

Born about 1904 in Damascus. Brother of Akram Kailani (*q.v.*). Made no secret of his admiration for the Germans, and after the British occupation of Syria in 1941 reappeared in Waziristan where he is known to have stirred up tribesmen to join in a rebellion against the Afghan Government. Was found in the British Zone of Germany in the autumn of 1945; representations were made by the Foreign Office to the War Office that all possible steps should be taken to prevent him returning to Syria. The India Office took the same view as regards India. He returned to Damascus, however, in July 1946 in a French ship. Failed in 1947 elections. As a result of high gambling and election expenses his finances are shaky. A cruel and ruthless person of considerable ability, who would probably be ready to support any régime from which he could expect to benefit. Lay low, mostly in Beirut, during Zaim's régime. Implicated with his brother Akram (*q.v.*) in the murder of the Qadhi of Damascus early in 1950 and sentenced to four years' imprisonment which he is now serving. Has a German wife.

56. Kayyali, Abdurrahman

Born 1890. Educated in the American University of Beirut. Married into the Mudarres family. King Faisal's Chamberlain at Damascus. Prominent Nationalist but inclined to preach moderation. Elected Nationalist Deputy for Aleppo in 1936. Minister of Education and of Justice in the former Nationalist Government. Went to Geneva in December 1936, to put forward the Arab claim for Alexandretta. Sent from Damascus to Aleppo in February 1937 to apologise to the French for the Iron Shirt clash with the French Gendarmerie. Minister of Education and Justice in the second Jamil Mardam Cabinet (July 1937 to February 1939). Minister of National Economy in the Lutfi Haffar Cabinet (February to March 1939). His moderate party was swamped in July 1943 elections by Saadullah Jabri, but he was eventually elected himself and was Minister for Justice in Saadullah Jabri's first Government August 1943 to October 1944. Minister of Justice and Minister of Public Works in Fares Khouri's first Government October 1944 to April 1945. Became a leading member of the Constitutional Liberal Party and lost no opportunity of attacking succeeding Governments in the Chamber of Deputies. Failed in 1947 elections. Member of Syrian Delegation to United Nations General Assembly in Paris, 1948. President of the National Party since 1949. His influence is probably less than might be expected. Intelligent, but not masterful.

57. Khankan, Rifa'at, Brigadier

A Moslem of Kurdish origin from Khanaqin. Born in Damascus about 1904. Educated at the American University at Beirut, became lieutenant-colonel in 1942, colonel in 1949 and brigadier in 1952. Is at present Director of Conscription, Recruiting and Military Justice. He has served mainly on the staff and has never commanded troops. He is lazy, of scant intelligence and does not command the confidence of his subordinates. He is, however, likeable and makes friends easily. He speaks Arabic, Turkish, French and some English.

58. Khater, Murshid, Dr.

Lebanese by birth but has lived in Syria since 1920. Graduate of Jesuit University, Beirut. Doctor of medicine. Former professor at Syrian University (retired) but still operates there occasionally and is senior surgeon at the Military Hospital at Mezze. Well known as a capable surgeon. Maronite. About 65 years of age. Has

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never openly taken part in politics until appointed Minister of Public Health on 9th June, 1952. An intimate friend of Munir Sadat (q.v.).

An easy-going individual, financially independent. Speaks excellent French. No English.

59. Kekhia, Rushdi

Born 1905. Belongs to a well-known middle-class Aleppo Moslem family. Studied law at Damascus University. Elected Deputy for Aleppo, December 1936, he became known for his vehement speeches in the Syrian Assembly. Resigned from the National bloc, March 1939. Deputy for Aleppo in 1943 in opposition to both the Jabri and Kayali groups, and remained opposed to them in Parliament; re-elected in 1947 on list of Parliamentary Constitutional Party. A man of some character and seriousness of purpose but not much brain; is known and admired as a man sincerely devoted to constitutional practices, which he carried with him into the Popular Party whose leader he became in August 1948. His opposition to the Mardam and Khaled el Azm Cabinets in 1948 and his obstinate refusal to associate himself with the Zaim régime made him extremely popular. After the overthrow of Zaim he accepted the post of Minister of the Interior in Hashim Atassi's predominantly Popular Party Cabinet. In November 1949 elected to the Constituent Assembly, of which he was President. A strong protagonist of the idea of Syro-Iraqi union.

President of the Chamber of Deputies from September 1950 until March 1951 when he resigned following the fall of Nazim Oudsi's Government. Imprisoned after Colonel Shishakli's *coup d'état* of 29th November, 1951; released, April 1952.

60. Khatib, Muhammad Subhi

Born 1911. Studied in Syrian elementary schools. Showed an interest in social affairs from an early age. Began his career as a labourer in a textile factory. There he organised the first Syrian trade union in 1929. He devoted his leisure to study and the spread of the trade union movement. By 1936 he had created unions in several trades in Damascus. In 1937 he succeeded in winning official approval for a Syrian Labour Law. In 1946 he carried his work a stage further by securing the passage of a comprehensive and progressive Labour Law. He has succeeded in unifying the Trade Union Movement in Syria and is president of the General Council of Syrian Trade Unions. Since 1933 he has used journalism as an instrument in his struggle. His main contributions have appeared in the local magazines of which he has been editor at various times. Early in 1950 he began publishing a trade union newspaper called *Al Ummal*. Bitterly opposed to Communism and constantly attacked by the Communist underground press in Syria.

He is a man of high principle, intelligent, industrious and slightly self-effacing in company.

61. Khoja, Hamid

Born 1907 of a family of religious teachers. Educated at the Franciscan School at Aleppo and at the Teachers' Training College, Aleppo. Studied law in Paris, where he obtained his degree. Deputy for Raqqa 1932-36 and again 1943. Appointed Kaimakam 1937 first at Ziyiyeh and then at Jerablous. A leading member of the Constitutional Liberal Party, he failed in the 1947 elections as the result of the intervention of the Syrian President in favour of his own candidate. His influence might prove important in the tribal area where he is the recognised political leader of a number of influential tribal sheiks. Has shown readiness to co-operate with the British and is an agreeable and cultivated widely travelled individual. Elected to the Constituent

Assembly in November 1949. Secretary of the Republican Liberal bloc formed by Abdul Baqi Nizamuddin (q.v.) early in 1950. Minister of Public Works in Hassan Hakim's (q.v.) Government from August to November 1951.

62. Khouri, Faiz

Born about 1891. Greek Orthodox. Educated by Irish Presbyterian Mission, at American College, Beirut, and at Law School, Istanbul. Originally Protestant, but converted to Orthodoxy in 1935 as latter community had representative in Chamber and Protestants had not. Elected to the Constituent Assembly, 1928, as mouthpiece for his brother Fares (q.v.). Noted Nationalist. Dean of the Faculty of Law at the Syrian University, Damascus, from year 1941 to 1943. Nationalist Deputy in 1932 with great following among university students. Played a leading part in the first session of Parliament and again during the general strike of 1936. Re-elected Deputy in December 1936. Head of the Damascus Bar, 1936 to 1940. Minister of Finance and Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs in the fifteen day ministry of Lutfi Haffar, 1939. Minister for Foreign Affairs under Hassan al Hakim, September 1941 to April 1942, and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister of Finance in Husni Barazi Government (April 1942 to January 1943). Took strong line with the French over concessions of form to Syrian independence, but was unsuccessful. In agreement with Lebanese, struggled to obtain control of "Intérêts Communs." Framed budget for 1942 balanced (on paper) with proceeds from new taxes on income and agriculture. Was president of Commission supérieure to monopolise Syrian wheat, and displayed considerable energy and courage. Was attacked by landlords, &c., as being a Christian and corrupt, and forced to resign presidency of Wheat Office in July 1942. When Jamil Ulshi replaced Husni Barazi as Prime Minister (January 1943) Faiz Khouri gave up the Ministry of Finance, retaining only the Ministry for Foreign Affairs; one of the reasons for this being that it was felt that, as a Christian, he was not in a strong position to enforce taxation projects. He remained in office until the fall of the Ulshi Government, March 1943. His association with the non-parliamentary régime of 1941-43 brought him into disfavour with the Nationalists, who refused to include him on their electoral list. He stood as an independent and failed, retiring to Beirut where he remained for a year. Appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to Moscow April 1945; remaining there for a few months only he returned to Damascus and was appointed as Acting Director-General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, October to December 1945. Placed on pension 1946. Appointed Syrian Minister to Washington, June 1947. Head of Syrian delegation to United Nations Assembly, September 1949 and 1950.

A man of moderate political opinions and considerable intelligence with undoubted ambition but has the reputation of being difficult to work with. Speaks good English and French. Despite his religion, is on good terms with Moslems.

63. Khouri, Fakis

Born about 1875. Brother of Faiz Khouri (q.v.). Educated at American College at Beirut. Protestant. Was a dragoon at British Consulate, Damascus, from 1899 to 1909. A member of the Turkish Parliament in 1913. Lawyer, Minister of Finance under Faisal, when he discreetly lined his pockets. Minister of Public Instruction under Damad, 1926. Deported some months later on suspicion of assisting rebels, thus winning martyr's crown of glory and confidence of Moslems. Well-off. Chairman of board of directors of National Cement Company; was professor of the School of Law, but resigned in

1941; legal adviser to the municipality until 1942, when he passed it to his son Suhail. Took leading part in the general strike of 1936. Went to Paris in March 1936 as member of the Nationalist delegation to negotiate a Franco-Syrian treaty. Deputy, December 1936. Elected President of the Chamber of Deputies (Speaker) on 21st December, 1936, in recognition of his services to the Nationalist bloc in the treaty negotiations. From fall of Nationalist Government in 1939, played no active part in politics until 1943, when he was re-elected Deputy by a bare majority and again in 1947. President of the Chamber August 1943 to October 1944 and again October 1945 to October 1946. Prime Minister and Minister for Interior and for Education, October 1944 to April 1945. Member of Syrian Committee which signed Charter of Arab League, March 1945; Prime Minister April to August 1945. Head of Syrian Delegation to United Nations Organisation Conference at San Francisco April 1945. Prime Minister August to October 1945. Head of Syrian Delegation to United Nations Organisation Conference at London, November 1945, and to Round Table Conference on Palestine in London August 1946 and to United Nations General Assembly Session October 1947. Syrian Representative on Security Council December 1946-48. On his return to Syria enjoyed the position of revered elder statesman but has refused to accept any ministerial post. Although he gave Zaim's régime his blessing he criticised what he considered to be the unconstitutional nature of some of Zaim's acts. Is a prudent and skilful, if unscrupulous, politician, who is, despite his religion, on good terms with the Moslems and not with the Christians. Talks excellent English. A likable but obstinate old man: his age and heart trouble have made him incapable of withstanding the rough and tumble of Syrian politics. Represents Syria on the United Nations International Law Commission. Came out strongly against the clause in the draft Constitution (April 1950) making Islam the religion of the State. Replaced by Farid Zainuddin (q.v.) in June, 1951 as head of the Permanent Syrian Delegation to the United Nations, but headed the Syrian Delegation to the General Assembly in the autumn of 1951. Is clearly now intellectually well past his prime.

64. Lian, Mikhael Michel

Born Aleppo 1900. Greek Orthodox. Educated American University, Beirut. Professes an extreme form of nationalism. Was secretary at Aleppo of the Nationalist bloc before he was elected Deputy for Aleppo in July 1943. In August 1945 he organised a large number of Deputies to present a petition to the President of the Chamber asking for the resignation of Fares Khouri's second Government. August to November 1945 Minister for Foreign Affairs in Fares Khouri's third Government. April to December 1946 Minister of Public Works in Saadullah Jabri's third Government. Failed in the 1947 elections on the President's list, but became Minister of National Economy in Jamil Mardam's 1948 Government. Speaks some English and French and has shown himself anxious to be well regarded by the British. He is an assiduous political intriguer and enjoyed Saadullah Jabri's support but otherwise appears to be stupid and incompetent. Pretended to co-operate with Husni Zaim but secretly worked hard against him.

65. Maizer ibn Abdul Muhsin al Jarba, Shaiikh

Born 1907. Became head of the tribe of Shammar of Zor in 1907, when French recognised him instead of Mishaal al Fares. Distant cousin of Daham al Hadi (q.v.), who aspires to his place. Deputy 1936-39. In 1941 had contacts with German Armistice Commission in Beirut. Deputy in 1943 and 1947 for Badiat el Jezireh.

Of a peaceful disposition and weak in character. Was always led by French. Elected to the Constituent Assembly in November 1949.

66. Maloyan, Hrant

Armenian Catholic. Born Istanbul 1895; graduate of Istanbul College; teacher Military College Istanbul 1915-16. Took part in 1914-18 war with 53rd Turkish Division at Ghaza. Chief of the Armenian Division in the French army at Beirut in 1918. As second lieutenant took part in occupation of Adana and Cilicia; promoted to rank of captain 1918; was appointed to Syrian Gendarmerie at Aleppo, Acre and Antioch 1921 to 1925, during Syrian revolution was transferred to Damascus 1925-26 in charge of Gendarmerie Transport Company; from 1935-37 was Officer Commanding, Gendarmerie Hama, Deir-az-Zor and Euphrates. 1939-41 Officer Commanding, Gendarmerie, Damascus, Mohafazat. 1942-45 was promoted to rank of lieutenant-colonel and appointed Officer Commanding, Gendarmerie, First Legion. In August 1945 was promoted to rank of colonel and appointed acting Commandant-General of Gendarmerie. He took no part in the *coups d'état* of Zaim and Hinnawi although he could easily have cashed in. He was retired after the second *coup d'état* in August 1949. He speaks Arabic, English, French, Turkish, Greek, Italian and Armenian.

Extremely able and intelligent and it was largely due to his capability that the Syrian Gendarmerie has been reorganised and has reached a reasonable standard of efficiency. Always ready to co-operate with the British but since the *coups d'état* of 1949 has become suspect because of his close connexion with them.

67. Mardam, Abdulrahman, Colonel

A Sunni Moslem, born Damascus 1916. Entered Military School, Homs, 1937 and later that year entered St. Cyr, France as officer cadet. 1939, graduated from St. Cyr and appointed second-lieutenant in the Syrian army. 1942, promoted lieutenant. 1944, promoted captain. 1945, served in Syrian gendarmerie and later that year resigned from the French forces. 1946, made provost marshal. 1948, commanded the 1st Armoured Battalion in the Palestinian war. 1949, promoted major and given local rank of lieutenant-colonel on appointment as military attaché, London. 1952, promoted to full colonel.

This officer is intelligent and of average ability, but idle and takes little interest in his work as military attaché.

Colonel Shishakli fully realises that Mardam's appointment is detrimental to the Syrian army's relationship with the War Office, but at the present moment it suits him to keep this officer away from Syria.

68. Mardam, Haidar

Brother-in-law of Jamil Mardam Bey. Born Damascus, 1898. Graduated from Law School, Damascus, 1923. Married Damascus Christian and went to France to study law for several years. Secretary to municipality 1929-30. In 1936 Kaimakam at Ma'nrat. January 1938 (Nationalist Government) "chef de protocole" in the Foreign Office and in March 1938 appointed Acting Mohafiz of Jezirah. In July 1939 Kaimakam of Idlib. In August 1941 appointed Mohafiz of Homs, where he remained until June 1942, when he was dismissed because he was suspected by Syrian Government of carrying information to French. In August 1942 he was appointed to the Foreign Office as "chef de protocole." Mohafiz of Hauran, April 1943 to March 1946, when he was transferred to the central office at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, but

refused to take up his post as it was graded lower in rank than that of Mohalitz. While Mohalitz of the Hauran he was suspected by the Government of being in suspiciously close touch with Amman, but was the first to "clean up" the French in 1945, when he seems to have shown energy, courage and ability to handle a fluid situation, and firmness tempered with justice towards a defeated enemy. Appointed Syrian Minister to Jeddah in March 1947. Recalled in June 1949.

Mildly Nationalist in politics, pleasant and open-minded, but rather lacking in energy. Appointed Syrian Minister to Rome in June 1951.

69. Mardam, Jamil

Born about 1890. Nationalist member of Constituent Assembly 1928. Deputy in 1932 and Minister of Finance. Was a member of the Nationalist delegation that went to Paris in March 1936 and became Prime Minister and Minister of National Economy December 1936 to July 1937. He formed new Cabinet July 1937, but his Government was attacked, notably by Dr. Shahbandar and Munir Ajlani, over the 1936 Franco-Syrian Treaty. Relations between Mardam and Shahbandar continued to deteriorate until the former was forced to resign. He and his Cabinet were openly accused by the press of great corruption and peculation. When Shahbandar was murdered in July 1940 Jamil Mardam was accused by the Shahbandarists of complicity and, with a few others, fled to Bagdad. Was in Bagdad at the beginning of the Rashid Ali revolt (May 1941), but is believed to have exerted moderating influence on rebels. Returned to Syria May 1941.

In January 1942 he went to Egypt, and, on his return, tried to provoke a political crisis by pretending that he enjoyed the confidence of the British, who had asked him to form a Government. He repeated this manoeuvre with greater insistence in June 1942. As a result, the Allies obliged him to live in the Lebanon and a communiqué was issued condemning his action. Elected Deputy in 1943 and in 1947 on Shukri Quwatli's list. Minister for Foreign Affairs and president of Cereals Commission in Saadallah Jabri's first Government, August 1943 to October 1944. Syrian representative on the Committee of Foreign Ministers of Arab Countries which met in Cairo in February 1945 to draw up Arab League Charter. Minister for Foreign Affairs and for Defence and Government representative to Supreme Mira Council in Fares Khouri's first Government, October 1944 to April 1945. Minister for Foreign Affairs and for Defence in Fares Khouri's second Government, April to August 1945; Acting Prime Minister during the Prime Minister's absence at U.N.O. Conference in San Francisco and was therefore head of the Government at the time of the events of May 1945. Appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to Cairo, October 1945, and also to Saudi Arabia, October 1945, and presided at November 1945 session of Arab League, and on several other occasions has represented Syria at Arab League Meetings. Prime Minister and Minister of Interior and Health December 1946 to February 1947. Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs April 1947. Appointed Military Governor Syria 15th May, 1948. Minister of Defence 23rd May, 1948. His Government was forced to resign in December 1948 by popular demonstrations. Has since lived outside Syria.

Foxy, *souple* and a trimmer. A man of great ambition and considerable ability, but not very scrupulous in money matters. Is probably the most likely of the leading members of the old Nationalist bloc to ally himself with a monarchical movement if he thought his interests lay that way.

70. Milqi, Rait

Born Hama about 1905 of humble family. Sunni Moslem. Lawyer. Extreme Nationalist and fomenter of riots. Very intelligent and had considerable influence over the masses, who supported his anti-feudal policy. Sincerely believes in his cause. Is prepared to use violence. Deputy for Hama 1943 but failed in 1947. Became a leading member of the Constitutional Liberal Party and joint editor of *Al Yaqza* with Akram Hourani (q.v.). Has a reputation in Parliament for demagogic oratory, which is usually of the most violent type directed against someone or something. Elected to the Constituent Assembly in November 1949 as an Independent. Vice-President of the Assembly. Fell out with Akram Hourani (q.v.) before the elections and joined the Coalition list of Husni Barazi. A bitter foe of Akram Hourani in Assembly debates. Appointed Minister of Education and Acting Minister of National Economy in the Cabinet formed by Khalid al Azm on 27th March, 1951.

71. Mubarak, Muhammad

Born 1912. Son of the late Abdul Qadir Mubarak (of Algerian origin), who was a prominent member of the Arab Academy, Damascus. Graduate of Syrian University, faculties of law, arts and sciences. Also holds a licence in literature from the Sorbonne. A teacher in the Government secondary school of Damascus, he later became an inspector of education. Leading member of the Ikhwan al Muslimeen and elected to Parliament in 1947 as their candidate. Elected to the Constituent Assembly in November 1949 as one of the candidates of the Islamic Socialist Front. Appointed Minister of Public Works in the Cabinet formed by Khalid al Azm in December 1949. Resigned with the rest of the Cabinet in May 1950. After Ma'ruf Dawalibi's (q.v.) Cairo statement in April 1950 Muhammad Mubarak, together with Shaikh Mustafa al Sebai and the rest of the Islamic Socialist Front, began publicly to advocate a rapprochement between the Arab States and the Soviet Union, and called for a treaty of friendship between Syria and the Soviet Union. They later ceased this clamour and even made statements against communism. Allied with People's Party in 1951. Mubarak became Minister of Agriculture in Hassan Hakim's (q.v.) Government, August to November 1951, and in Ma'ruf Dawalibi's (q.v.) Government, 28th to 29th November, 1951. Imprisoned in January 1952 by Colonel Shishakli when he and Mustafa Sibai (q.v.) showed signs of preparing to call out the mobs ostensibly in support of Egypt but really to upset or embarrass the régime.

72. Mudarris, Muhammad Khalil

Born 1894. Member of a family of wealthy Aleppo landowners who have a perpetual feud with the Jabris (q.v.). President of the Aleppo Cotton Spinning Company. Moderate in politics. Appointed Minister of Finance in the Ministry of Nassouhi al Bukhari (March-May 1939). Was several times consulted by Sheikh Taj ed Din in 1942 with a view to his becoming a Minister in the Syrian Government, but was reputed to have refused any office unless it was that of Prime Minister. He did not therefore become a member of the Cabinet. His brother, Ahmed, was elected Deputy 1943. Industrious and well respected; is a friend of Jamil Mardam Bey and Edmond Homsy.

73. Mudarris, Suleiman

Aged about 45. Educated at the American University at Beirut and St. John's College, Oxford, joined the I.P.C. in 1932. Between 1933-35 he assisted in negotiations for concessional areas in

Arabia. Seconded to Petroleum Concessions Ltd., in 1936. Appointed manager of Syrian Petroleum Company and Iraq Petroleum Company in Syria in 1941; became general representative of the Iraq Petroleum Company in Syria in June 1952.

A widower; very Anglophile. Agreeable and efficient though not of outstanding ability. He takes no part in politics though his sympathies are probably with the National Party.

74. Muhairi, Issam

Born in Damascus, 30 years old. Educated at Lycée Franco-Arabe and later at Syrian University. Comes of a well-to-do property-owning family. Unmarried.

Elected to Parliament in 1950, was P.P.S. Member for Damascus. After the dissolution of Parliament and the political parties, was thought to have been close to Colonel Shishakli, who was once himself an active member of the same party. He was thus a rival to Akram Hourani (q.v.) but like Hourani seems now to be in the background. Owner of the paper *Jeel al Jadid*. Speaks French and some English.

Like most members of his party he exudes doctrine and is slightly xenophobic.

75. Muhammad, Said Agha

Born at Amouda 1899. A Sunni Moslem Kurd and religious fanatic. Writes some Arabic, speaks Turkish and Kurdish. Chief of Dakourieh tribe. Took a leading part in Christian massacres in 1937; fled to Iraq, but returned in 1942. Wrote a letter calling on Kurds in the name of their religion to fight the British. Elected Deputy for Qamichlié in 1943. Strong and unruly, but influential in his district.

76. Muhasin, Fuad

Born in Damascus in 1902. Studied law in Syria. Practised for four years as a lawyer. Became a judge in 1926 and a member of the High Court of Appeal later. Worked as a Secretary at the Presidency under Shukri Quwatli. Became Secretary-General of the Ministry of the Interior in 1948.

Hates foreigners and is disliked by Syrian officials. He possesses a gift for making himself indispensable and managed to keep his post during the Shukri and Zaim régimes of 1949. He was dismissed by the Atassi Government in August 1949. Appointed Mohafez of the Jebel Druse in April 1951.

77. Mujhim bin Muhaid, Amir

Born about 1885. Bedouin chief, head of the Fedaan Wuld tribe in the Jezirah and Euphrates region. Given the title of Amir and awarded the Legion of Honour by the French in 1921 on the model of the chiefs of the Rualla. Deputy for Jezirah in 1936, 1943 and 1947. Had well-armed forces and was supported by the French though he was careful not to offend the British. Of considerable importance but unpleasant, cold and astute in character, and likely to turn any emergency to his advantage. His eldest son, Nouri, who was elected to the Constituent Assembly in November 1949, lacks his father's dignity and astuteness.

78. Murhij, Farid

Born Hama about 1900. Greek Orthodox. Wealthy landowner of Hama, who habitually indulges in smuggling. Cultivates friendship of Moslems, with whom he is well established. Enjoys support of Bishop Hureiki (q.v.). Deputy for Hama 1943 and Controller in the Chamber of Deputies October 1945 to October 1946.

An attractive personality but entirely self interested. Elected to Constituent Assembly in November 1949.

79. Murshid, Rakkam Shaikh

Born about 1905. Bedouin chief. Head of the small but predatory Saba's tribe (Bteinat), which is usually encamped in the Salimiyeh district. Deputy for the Damascus tribes 1936-39. A sheikh after the novelist's heart. Generous to the poor but a fierce ruler. Realises that the nomadic life of the Bedouins is doomed to extinction and is now actively sedentarising his people. Elected Deputy for Palmyra tribal area 1943 and in 1947. Elected to the Constituent Assembly in November 1949.

80. Nizamuddin, Abdul Baqi

Born 1903 in the Nassibain, Turkey, where his father was Kaimakam. Elementary education. Is recognised as a political leader of Moslems in the Jezirah. Was elected Deputy in 1943 with French support, but since then has professed strong independent Arab views, and was re-elected in 1947. Owns large properties, from which he draws his income. Reported to have sympathised with the revolt of Rashid Ali in Iraq. Elected to the Constituent Assembly in November 1949. Minister of Agriculture in Khalid al Azm's Cabinet of December 1949. Formed the Republican Liberal bloc in the Assembly in March 1950. Resigned with the rest of the Cabinet in May 1950. Appointed Minister of Agriculture and Acting Minister of Justice in the Cabinet formed by Khalid al Azm on 27th March, 1951. Reputed to have appropriated large tracts of land when in office.

81. Qanbar, Ahmed

An Aleppo lawyer. Leading member of the Aleppo branch of the People's Party. Owner of *Al Nathir* the organ of the People's Party in Aleppo. First elected to Parliament in 1947. Elected to the Constituent Assembly in November 1949. Appointed Minister of Public Works in Nazim Qudsi's Cabinet in September 1950. Resigned with the rest of the Cabinet on 9th March, 1951. Minister of the Interior in Ma'ruf Dawalibi's (q.v.) Government on 28th and 29th November, 1951. Imprisoned by Colonel Shishakli after the latter's *coup d'Etat* and released in April 1952.

An able and eloquent politician who, with Nazim Qudsi (q.v.) built up the People's Party. Reputedly honest although accused of nepotism and corruption by his political enemies.

82. Qudsi, Nazim

Born 1906 in Aleppo. Lawyer. Active during troubles of February 1936. Resigned from Nationalist bloc March 1939 and has since been in opposition to the bloc. Considered suitable in 1941 as British propagandist, but refused pay. Suggested for position in Syrian Cabinet in March 1942, but his candidature was ruled out by the Allies on account of his past xenophobe record. Elected Deputy in July 1943 and in 1947, and worked with Rushdi Kekhia (q.v.) as reasonable critic of Government; refused Cabinet rank. Minister Plenipotentiary to United States January 1945 to August 1946. Member of Syrian Delegation to U.N.O. Conference at San Francisco April 1945. Member of Syrian Delegation to U.N.O. Conference at London November 1945. Prominent member of Popular Party. Appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs in Hashim Atassi's Government of August 1949. Elected to the Constituent Assembly in November 1949. Formed a Cabinet in December 1949, after Lieut.-Colonel Adib Shishakly's military *coup*, but resigned after less than twenty-four hours as he would not submit to army pressure. Subsequently elected by the Assembly as chairman of the committee which was formed to draft the new Constitution. At the beginning of June 1950 formed a Cabinet in succession to that of

Khalid al Azm, with army support. A serious-minded, upright and sincere little man who, however, nurses deep-rooted suspicions of French and American designs on the Middle East as a whole and Syria in particular. By contrast he is well-disposed towards Britain, whom he trusts considerably more than the other Big Powers. As a result of differences with the military clique led by Lieut.-Colonel Adib Shishakli, which he attributed mainly to French intrigues, Nazim Qudsi resigned on 9th March, 1951. After the fall of Zaim in 1949 Qudsi strongly advocated union with Iraq but he later became more cautious and in December 1950 submitted to the Arab League a much broader plan for the unity of Arab States. Imprisoned by Colonel Shishakli after the *coup d'Etat* of 29th November. Released February 1952.

83. Quwatli, Shukri

Born about 1886. Supporter of Faisal. During the rebellion of 1925 afforded every assistance to the rebels. He fled to Palestine, but returned to Syria in 1931. Vice-president of the Nationalist bloc at its inception. Made Finance Minister and Defence Minister (combined) in Jamil Mardam's Cabinet on 21st December, 1936. As head of his own party (Istiklal), but allied with the Nationalists, was bitterly opposed to Council of Directors, but until French armistice (June 1940) did not take overt political action. He was in close contact with the Italian Disarmament Commission during the whole of their stay here and was a constant caller on the Italian Consulate in Damascus. Met Roser, the German Agent, several times during the latter's stay in Syria. On arrival of Allies was openly opposed to them and judged it best to go on "pilgrimage" to Mecca (October 1941). Went to Baghdad, where he was entrusted by Ibn Saud with various negotiations between Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Returned to Damascus (September 1942). Entered elections of 1943 as Nationalist leader. Elected Deputy and President of the Republic by overwhelming majority. Fell seriously ill (April 1944); his life was saved by British military doctors with transfusions of British blood. Visited Baghdad in March 1945, where he was not warmly received. Attended meeting of Arab rulers at Inshass in May 1946. Re-elected President for a second term in April 1948. After that his popularity declined rapidly and he was incapable of appreciating the progressive economic policy initiated by Khaled el Azm later that year. He was arrested by Husni Zaim on 30th March, 1949, and resigned on 6th April. He has since then lived in Switzerland and Egypt where he now is.

A determined exponent of pan-Arabism. Is somewhat slow and ponderous. Has not got a quick or brilliant brain but has a good deal of wisdom. Mentally and physically he might not unfairly be likened to an elephant. Made quite a good representative head of State. Was regarded in the early days of the war as pro-Axis and undoubtedly had contacts with Axis representatives in the Levant, but this can probably be attributed to entire single-mindedness of purpose in the Arab cause. It was at one time rumoured, but there is no proof, that he had used his official position to advance his own financial interests. In 1945 and 1946 he co-operated well with the British authorities and he almost certainly has a sense of profound gratitude towards the British both politically and personally. This is not to say that he might not take a line opposed to British policy if he thought Arab interests lay that way. Is not, unnaturally, profoundly opposed to any suggestion for a monarchical régime in Syria.

84. Rayyis, Hani

Mohafez of Aleppo. A wealthy Aleppine property owner. A lawyer by profession and at one

time held the post of President of the Court of Appeal in Lattakia.

A long-standing member of the Nationalist Party under whose rule he was first appointed Mohafez of Aleppo. Dismissed by the People's Party after their success in the elections of 1949. Although his political sympathies are probably Nationalist he resigned from the party immediately prior to (and doubtless to facilitate) his reappointment by the present régime.

A pleasant and sociable man of no particular ability. Speaks no foreign language.

85. Rayyis, Munir

Born Hama in 1899. Sunni. Cousin of Najib (q.v.). Strong Nationalist. Joined Palestine rebels in 1936 and became second in command to Fauzi Qawekji. Appointed head of the Secret Police (i.e., political) by the Nationalist Government in 1938 and in that capacity aided Palestine rebels. Dismissed a few months later on charges of brutality. Condemned to twenty years' prison and twenty years' banishment for plotting against life of Bahij al Khatib (head of Council of Directors) in 1939, but released in 1940 at intervention of Italian Armistice Commission. Flew in June 1941 on Allied approach and broadcast for Germans from Athens; returned to Syria at the end of 1945; is sole proprietor of the newspaper *Barada*, which during the Zaim régime changed its name to *Inqilab*.

A dangerous agitator and intriguer, associated with the Arab Club, League of National Action. Spearheaded the attacks in the Damascus press on Syro-Iraqi union after the fall of Zaim, whom he had fulsomely supported. Given his character, it is certain that the Saudi and Egyptian opponents of union made it worth his while. A thoroughly contemptible, venal and unscrupulous scoundrel. Anglophobe.

86. Rifa'i, Zafer, Dr.

Doctor of law (Nantes, France—1934). An Aleppine. 45 years old. 1938-1941: held posts as district officer in Kamichle, Jisr Shughour and Nebk. Participated in Rashid Ali Kilani's abortive attempt to seize power in Iraq in 1941. Escaped to Turkey, thence to Germany. Assisted in the foundation of the Arab National Party. Supported the National bloc in 1934. Appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs on 9th June, 1952.

87. Rikaby, Akram

Born 1900. Son of the late General Rida Pasha Rikaby. C.B.E. (Governor of Damascus after the British occupation in 1918).

Educated in Iraq and at Cambridge University where he took a degree in agriculture. Member of the Palestine Administration for some years. In charge of the Arab Kadoori School of Agriculture where he had the reputation of being efficient and hard-working though difficult to deal with as he tried to take too much under his wing. Appointed Director-General of National Economy in 1945 but resigned in 1946. Manager of Raftain Bank 1949-50. Appointed Director-General of Customs in October 1950. Dismissed in June 1951 and appointed Director-General of the Hejaz Railway. Appointed Secretary-General of Agriculture (while retaining charge of the Hejaz Railway) in 1952. Well disposed to the United Kingdom and at the same time a strong Nationalist.

88. Sadat, Munir, Dr.

Born 1903. Moslem. Educated at the Syrian University where he took a degree in medicine. Later specialised in surgery in France. Founder and owner of a well-known private hospital in Damascus in

ch his wife, a Finn, handles much of the administration. Politically he has frequently changed sides in an effort to gain Parliament. Originally member of the old Liberal Party he clung to the People's Party when the two were fused. Before elections, however, he deserted them and joined an independent list with Saadi Kaitani (q.v.). Appointed Director-General of Health in October 1950 and in that capacity visited England under British Counsels in 1951. Does not appear to be a man of outstanding character or principle but nevertheless he does have the knack of getting things done. Resigned his post in December 1951 rather than take oath not to participate in politics. Much of the present trouble over the activities of foreign cultural information centres in Syria can be traced to publicity which surrounded the action of Sadat's son who, during a visit to the United States, was photographed shaking hands in public with an Israeli student.

Sahnaoui, Jean

Born about 1905. Greek Catholic of humble extraction, one of seven brothers, all of whom are very wealthy. Appointed honorary Spanish Vice-consul in 1936. Because prominent in Greek Catholic circles was considered pro-Italian, but in the following French collapse showed considerable signs of being pro-British. In April to September 1941 was Minister of Finance in Khalid al Azm's Government. During winter of 1941-42 was engaged in large contracts for British army over which he was not too well treated—but has nevertheless made a great deal of money. Represented Syrian Chamber of Commerce at the Commercial Conference held in Chicago in 1945. Left Damascus May for a lengthy private commercial tour of the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States. His visit to the United Kingdom was strongly backed by the Department of Overseas Trade. Managing Director of Syrian Airlines and of big sugar and glass companies and interested in the formation of a National Bank. Although not a politician accepted it as Minister of National Economy in Khalid al Azm's Cabinet of December 1948 (which fell on 14th March, 1949) and showed himself a progressive and thoughtful Minister anxious to promote commercial relations between Syria and the outside world. Is an extremely unsatisfactory business man to deal with, putting off any decision to the last possible moment; amiable personality, close personal friend of Khalid al Azm and open to social flattery.

Sawwat, Husni

Born 1900. Moslem. Studied at the American University of Beirut and afterwards taught there until 1947 as Professor of Economics. Counsellor of the Syrian Legation in Washington 1947-49 during which time he took his Ph.D. at George Washington University. Appointed Secretary-General of the Ministry of National Economy in April 1949. One of the very few Syrian administrative officials who can be counted on to give a balanced view on any one of the many economic problems affecting Syria. Has a quiet, agreeable manner. Acting Minister of National Economy after Colonel Shishakli's *coup d'Etat* of 29th November, 1951, reverting to Secretary-General on formation of Government on 14th June, 1952.

Sayigh, Maximos IV

Born in 1878. Archbishop of Tyre in 1919 and Beirut in 1922. Elected Patriarch of the Greek Catholic Church in the East in succession to ghabghab in October 1947 by the Synod of the Greek Catholic Church meeting at 'Ain Traz in the Lebanon. He is well liked by the Greek Catholic

community and has decided to live in Damascus though he may spend a part of his time in Cairo and Alexandria, where he has palaces. Has on several occasions delivered anti-Communist sermons, and often intrigues in local politics.

92. Sha'alan, Fawwaz Amir

Born about 1907. Grandson of Nuri, whom he succeeded on latter's death in 1942. Even before he became chief, had a strong following in the Ruwala. Treacherously slew his rival and cousin, Farhan bin Mashur, near Palmyra in April 1935. Has married both his sisters into Ibn Saud's family, one to Ibn Saud himself and the other to the Amir Saud. These matches are looked upon by the Bedouin as having a political significance in connexion with the Wadi Sirhan grazing lands and the Jauf Oasis. Was Deputy 1936-39 under the Nationalist banner.

During the British blockade of Vichy Syria (1941) conducted a remunerative contraband trade between Transjordan and Syria. During Syrian campaign he and the Ruwala remained strictly neutral, although the Vichy French gave them a number of arms, which they largely surrendered on the Allied arrival in Damascus. In 1942 he was given profitable contracts by the British army. Elected Deputy for Bedouins of Damascus area 1943, and again in 1947: visited America at the time of the United Nations Conference in San Francisco, April 1945, and spent a month in England on his way back.

Like all Bedouin, a shameless money-seeker. Despite the fact that much of his earlier life was spent in Syrian and European cabarets, he is now a more dignified character, respected by the other tribal leaders and has become a leading force in the desert. His close connexions with Ibn Saud result in him being the only big tribal leader who is definitely opposed to Greater Syria. Played an important part in Ibn Saud's covert campaign against Syro-Iraqi union after Colonel Sami Hinnawi's *coup d'Etat* of August 1949. Vanished from Syria shortly before the unsuccessful attempt by a group of terrorists called the Arab Redemption Society, whom he was probably financing on behalf of King Ibn Saud, against the life of Lieut.-Colonel Adib Shishakli (q.v.) in October 1950. Has since appeared in Damascus but spends most of his time in Beirut or abroad.

93. Sharif, Hisan

Born about 1892. Lawyer. French degree (*à titre d'étranger*). Secretary of the People's Party 1924. Member of the Constituent Assembly 1928, when he held most uncompromising Nationalist views. Insisted on standing for elections in 1932, thus nearly spoiling the agreement with the High Commissioner's delegate. Nationalist Deputy, 1932 and 1936. Appointed Syrian member on Joint Higher Commission for Common Interests with Lebanese, January to September 1944. Mohafez of Aleppo, September 1944 to May 1946, during which period he was successful in preventing any major clash between Syrians and French. Earned the gratitude of the Christian minorities for protecting their interests, for which he was decorated by the Pope. Appointed first Syrian Minister to the Turkish Republic, July 1946. Syrian representative on Security Council Committee of Enquiry to Greece, January 1947. Appointed Syrian Minister to Greece in September 1947. A man of sincere convictions with a violent temper. A minor Nationalist leader, who has, however, not been active for some time. Recalled to Damascus in August 1949. Secretary-general of the Republican Democratic (pro-Quwatli) Party formed in February 1950.

Khalid al Azm, with army support. A serious-minded, upright and sincere little man who, however, nurses deep-rooted suspicions of French and American designs on the Middle East as a whole and Syria in particular. By contrast he is well-disposed towards Britain, whom he trusts considerably more than the other Big Powers. As a result of differences with the military clique led by Lieut.-Colonel Adib Shishakli, which he attributed mainly to French intrigues, Nazim Qudsi resigned on 9th March, 1951. After the fall of Zaim in 1949 Qudsi strongly advocated union with Iraq but he later became more cautious and in December 1950 submitted to the Arab League a much broader plan for the unity of Arab States. Imprisoned by Colonel Shishakli after the *coup d'Etat* of 29th November. Released February 1952.

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89. Sahnouni, Jean

Born about 1905. Greek Catholic of humble extraction, one of seven brothers, all of whom are now wealthy. Appointed honorary Spanish Vice-Consul in 1936. Because prominent in Greek Catholic circles was considered pro-Italian, but in year following French collapse showed considerable signs of being pro-British. In April to September 1941 was Minister of Finance in Khalid al Azm's Government. During winter of 1941-42 was engaged in large contracts for British army over which he was not too well treated—but has nevertheless made a great deal of money. Represented Syrian Chamber of Commerce at the Commercial Conference held in Chicago in 1945. Left Damascus in May for a lengthy private commercial tour of the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States. His visit to the United Kingdom was strongly backed by the Department of Overseas Trade. Managing director of Syrian Airlines and of big sugar and glass companies and interested in the formation of a National Bank. Although not a politician accepted post as Minister of National Economy in Khalid al Azm's Cabinet of December 1948 (which fell on 30th March, 1949) and showed himself a progressive and thoughtful Minister anxious to promote commercial relations between Syria and the outside world.

Is an extremely unsatisfactory business man to deal with, putting off any decision to the last possible moment; amiable personality, close personal friend of Khalid al Azm and open to social flattery.

90. Sawwaf, Husni

Born 1900. Moslem. Studied at the American University of Beirut and afterwards taught there until 1947 as Professor of Economics. Counsellor at the Syrian Legation in Washington 1947-49 during which time he took his Ph.D. at George Washington University. Appointed Secretary-General of the Ministry of National Economy in April 1949.

One of the very few Syrian administrative officials who can be counted on to give a balanced view on some of the many economic problems affecting Syria. He has a quiet, agreeable manner. Acting Minister of National Economy after Colonel Shishakli's *coup d'Etat* of 29th November, 1951, reverting to Secretary-General on formation of Government on 9th June, 1952.

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community and has decided to live in Damascus though he may spend a part of his time in Cairo and Alexandria, where he has palaces. Has on several occasions delivered anti-Communist sermons, and often intrigues in local politics.

92. Shu'alan, Fawwaz Amir

Born about 1907. Grandson of Nuri, whom he succeeded on latter's death in 1942. Even before he became chief, had a strong following in the Ruwalla. Treacherously slew his rival and cousin, Farhan bin Mashur, near Palmyra in April 1935. Has married both his sisters into Ibn Saud's family, one to Ibn Saud himself and the other to the Amir Saud. These matches are looked upon by the Bedouin as having a political significance in connexion with the Wadi Sirhan grazing lands and the Jauf Oasis. Was Deputy 1936-39 under the Nationalist banner.

During the British blockade of Vichy Syria (1941) conducted a remunerative contraband trade between Transjordan and Syria. During Syrian campaign he and the Ruwalla remained strictly neutral, although the Vichy French gave them a number of arms, which they largely surrendered on the Allied arrival in Damascus. In 1942 he was given profitable contracts by the British army. Elected Deputy for Bedouins of Damascus area 1943, and again in 1947; visited America at the time of the United Nations Conference in San Francisco, April 1945, and spent a month in England on his way back.

Like all Bedouin, a shameless money-seeker. Despite the fact that much of his earlier life was spent in Syrian and European cabarets, he is now a more dignified character, respected by the other tribal leaders and has become a leading force in the desert. His close connexions with Ibn Saud result in him being the only big tribal leader who is definitely opposed to Greater Syria. Played an important part in Ibn Saud's covert campaign against Syro-Iraqi union after Colonel Sami Hinnawi's *coup d'Etat* of August 1949. Vanished from Syria shortly before the unsuccessful attempt by a group of terrorists called the Arab Redemption Society, whom he was probably financing on behalf of King Ibn Saud, against the life of Lieut.-Colonel Adib Shishakli (q.v.) in October 1950. Has since appeared in Damascus but spends most of his time in Beirut or abroad.

93. Sharif, Ihsan

Born about 1892. Lawyer. French degree (*à titre d'étranger*). Secretary of the People's Party 1924. Member of the Constituent Assembly 1928, when he held most uncompromising Nationalist views. Insisted on standing for elections in 1932, thus nearly spoiling the agreement with the High Commissioner's delegate. Nationalist Deputy, 1932 and 1936. Appointed Syrian member on Joint Higher Commission for Common Interests with Lebanese, January to September 1944. Mohafez of Aleppo, September 1944 to May 1946, during which period he was successful in preventing any major clash between Syrians and French. Earned the gratitude of the Christian minorities for protecting their interests, for which he was decorated by the Pope. Appointed first Syrian Minister to the Turkish Republic, July 1946. Syrian representative on Security Council Committee of Enquiry to Greece, January 1947. Appointed Syrian Minister to Greece in September 1947. A man of sincere convictions with a violent temper. A minor Nationalist leader, who has, however, not been active for some time. Recalled to Damascus in August 1949. Secretary-general of the Republican Democratic (pro-Quwatli) Party formed in February 1950.

94. Shatra, Mahmoud, Lieutenant-Colonel

A Circassian Moslem, born near Aleppo in 1913. Became head of the Deuxième Bureau in 1950 and Commander of the Bedouin Control Force in 1951. He has nineteen years' service.

He is intelligent, crafty and a close friend of Colonel Shishakli. He is reputedly anti-British.

95. Shatti, Shawkar

Secretary-General, Ministry of Health.

Doctor of medicine, and professor at School of Medicine at the Syrian University. From 1949 to 1951 he and his wife studied English at the British Council Centre in Damascus. He seems well disposed towards the United Kingdom.

96. Shebat, Anis

Born 1908 in Damascus. Christian. Younger brother of Fuad Shebat (*q.v.*). Educated at the Orthodox and Lazarist Schools in Damascus, and later obtained a degree in Civil Engineering at the Beirut Engineering College after which he entered Government Service.

His first appointment in 1929 was with the technical office of the Public Works Department at Damascus. He was promoted in 1936 to be Chief of the office, a position which he held until 1944. He was then appointed Chief Engineer for the Southern area, and in 1949 promoted to Director of Communications in the Ministry of Public Works and Communications, and also Director of the Department of Concessionary Companies.

A capable civil servant. Speaks fluent French and fairly good English.

97. Shebat, Fuad

Brother of Anis Shebat (*q.v.*). He and his brother owe much of their success to hard and diligent work and the influence and support of the Orthodox Patriarchate with the French Mandatory Government. Fuad Shebat took a Doctorate of Law at a French University and later became a Professor of Law at the Syrian University. He first entered Government service in 1931 and was employed in the Prime Minister's office, Accounts Department; he was also an advisory member of the Council of State.

He is one of the most efficient and respected officials the Government possesses and has done good work as the Director of the Ministry of the Interior. Has published four books on law and administration and drafted the Syrian Nationality Law. He is a prominent member of the Greek Orthodox Community and is also a member of the Church Council. Visited England under British Council auspices 1951. Friendly to Britain. Acting Minister of the Interior after Colonel Shishakli's *coup d'Etat* of 29th November, 1951, reverting to Acting Secretary-General on formation of Government on 9th June, 1952.

98. Shehabi, Mustafa Amir

Born in Damascus 1893. Of Lebanese origin (Hasbaya). Cousin of Amir Bahjat (*q.v.*). Studied at one of the French schools in Damascus, at Istanbul and at the Agricultural School of Châlons, France. Lieutenant under Faisal and Inspector of Agriculture. Took flight when Faisal was forced to withdraw from Syria. Returned to Syria in 1923, when he was appointed Director of State Domains. In 1934 his position as Director of State Domains was suppressed and Shehabi was attached to the Ministry of Agriculture by Sheikh Taj ed Din. In 1935 he was one of the directors of the Damascus Exhibition, and in 1936 (February to December)

was Minister of Education under Ata Bey Ayoubi. He accompanied the Syrian delegation to Paris for the negotiation of the Franco-Syrian Treaty (1936). Mohafez of Aleppo (February 1937 to March 1939) under the Cabinet of Jamil Mardam, after which he went into retirement, devoting his time to compiling an Arabic-French botanical dictionary. Appointed Minister of Finance in the Jamil Ulshi Government on 8th January, 1943. Resigned on personal grounds on 17th March, 1943. Was appointed Minister of Finance, National Economy and Ravitaillement in Ata Ayoubi's Provisional Government, March to August 1943. Mohafez of Latakia 1943 to 1945. Secretary-General of Prime Minister's Office, December 1945 to June 1946. Appointed Mohafez of Aleppo, June 1946 to January 1948, when he was transferred to Latakia as Mohafez. Minister of Justice in Muhsin Barazi's Cabinet of June 1949. Enjoys reputation as a man of probity and drive. An agreeable personality, modest in demeanour but can be very obstinate.

Appointed Syrian Minister to Cairo in June 1951.

99. Shishakli, Adib, Colonel

Born 1901 in Hama. Took part in the Hama revolt against the French in 1925 and in 1945 deserted the French forces and joined the Syrian army. Battalion Commander in 1948 and in September of that year appointed second-in-command of a brigade. Took part in Husni Zaim's *coup d'Etat* of 30th March, 1949. Appointed Director-General of Police and Security soon after, and promoted to rank of lieutenant-colonel a few days later. Leader of the Parti Populaire Syrien in the army. Shishakli fell foul of Husni Zaim when the latter made him hand over Antoun Saade, head of the P.P.S., to the Lebanese authorities in July 1949, after asylum had been granted to Saade in Syria. As a result of their quarrel he was first relegated to the appointment of Commandant de la Place, Aleppo, then offered the post of Military Attaché, Jeddah, which he refused, and finally dismissed by Zaim at the end of July. Reinstated by the late Colonel Hinnawi after the latter's successful *coup* against Husni Zaim and appointed commander of the 1st Brigade. On 19th December, 1949, Shishakli took matters into his own hands and in collaboration with Akram Hourani (*q.v.*) organised a successful *coup* (he called it "disciplinary action") against Hinnawi. Shishakli, an avowed Republican, accused Hinnawi of plotting to bring about union with Iraq. Became Deputy Chief of the General Staff on the day of his *coup*. Since then he managed to maintain a firm control on the political situation in Syria. Became Chief of Staff in April 1951. Following a duel for power between the army and the politicians led by the People's Party, Shishakli staged a *coup d'Etat* on 29th November, 1951, imprisoning the newly-formed Government of Ma'ruf Dawalibi (*q.v.*) and leading People's Party politicians and installing Brigadier-General Fawzi Silo (*q.v.*) as Head of State and Prime Minister; the Secretaries-General of Ministries became acting Ministers. Shishakli remained Chief of Staff. During the early part of 1952 he paid official visits to the Lebanon, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. He had great difficulty in getting political support for the military régime but managed to form a Government of "new men" on 9th June, 1952.

He is married and has eight children. At first glance a quiet, shy little man, he is inclined to get tough after a drink or two and, as a result, thoroughly enjoys an evening's carousing in the cabarets. Although outwardly pleasant and amicable he is shrewd, very cunning and ruthless. He is out to strengthen his own position and sees in any project for closer association between Syria and her Hashimite neighbours a threat to his own position.

100. Shukair, Fuad Shawkat, Lieutenant-Colonel

A Druze, born in Lebanon in 1910. In 1950 he became Head of the Fourth Bureau and Administrative Assistant to the Chief of Staff. In 1952 made lieutenant-colonel and Officer Commanding, 4th Liwa.

He is said to be honest and is known to be an astute businessman with considerable experience of negotiating for arms purchases, in which connexion he paid visits during 1951 to France, Germany and Switzerland and obtained substantial quantities of arms, mostly from France. He has been a close confidant of Colonel Shishakli though he is at present out of favour for allegedly conspiring with the Druzes. He is strongly pro-French and speaks fluent French but no English.

101. Sibai, Hani

Moslem, born about 1902. Lawyer, judge and Deputy for Homs 1943 and again in 1947. With Hilmi Amassi formed a strong opposition movement to the Government; has a certain oratorical skill and impudence in public debate and does not hesitate to speak his mind in the House. Member of the Popular Party. Almost penniless in his capacity as a judge, he has had recourse many times to those legal adjustments for money so necessary among underpaid Syrian officials. Elected to the Constituent Assembly in November 1949. Appointed Minister of Education in the Cabinet formed by Khalid al Azm in December 1949. Resigned with the rest of the Cabinet in May 1950. Appointed Minister of Education in Nazim Qudsi's Cabinet in September 1950. Resigned with the rest of the Cabinet on 9th March, 1951. As Minister of Education was a most unco-operative and difficult person to deal with. An unattractive man without personality. Minister of Education in Ma'ruf Dawalibi's (*q.v.*) Government of 28th to 29th November, 1951. Imprisoned by Colonel Shishakli after the latter's *coup d'Etat*. Released in March 1952.

102. Sibai, Mustafa Shaikh

Born in Homs about 1915. Studied at Al-Azhar University, Cairo, where he was when Rashid Ali's rebellion took place. He was accused of having distributed a circular in Cairo calling on the Egyptian people to support the movement, was arrested by the Egyptian police and detained for some two months without trial; deported from Egypt and interned by the British authorities in Palestine at Sarafand for seven months. Repatriated to Syria, where he was again interned for two years, first at Mich-Mieh and then at Rashia; released early 1945, when he began to take a strong interest in the Moslem Brethren. Since 1946 he has been director of the Arab Institute in Damascus (a school run by the Moslem Brethren). He is controller-general of the Moslem Brethren in both Syria and the Lebanon, and was one of the principal editors of *El Manar* newspaper, the mouthpiece of the Moslem Brethren until its suppression in April 1949. *El Manar* reappeared in November 1949.

Elected to the Constituent Assembly in November 1949 as chief representative of the newly-formed Islamic Socialist Front (= Moslem Brethren) of which he is the main spokesman. In 1950 together with Muhammad Mubarak (*q.v.*) publicly advocated a rapprochement with the Soviet Union. A vehement ranting orator who appeals to the masses. Imprisoned by Colonel Shishakli early in 1952 when he and Muhammad Mubarak (*q.v.*) showed signs of preparing to call out the mobs ostensibly in support of Egypt but really to upset or embarrass the régime.

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103. Sidawi, Wadi'

Born Damascus 1907. Greek Orthodox. Took law degree, Damascus 1925. Worked as assistant for seventeen years to Yusuf el Isa on the paper *Alef Ba*, and in 1942 bought *Al Kifah* from Amin Said, but abandoned it in early 1943 to its original proprietor; editor of *El Nasr*. Speaks English and French. Was pro-Allied during the second world war but has since developed a greed for money which results in his newspaper vilifying anyone or any Government for a sufficient payment. In the first half of 1948 *El Nasr* was particularly anti-British over Palestine, and closely followed the changes in Communist treatment of news. The advent of Husni Zaim brought an era of unprecedented prosperity for Sidawi. *El Nasr* became one of the unofficial mouthpieces of the dictator and it is more than likely that Sidawi's present financial independence is the outcome of his wholehearted support of Zaim. He has undoubtedly some ability as a journalist and his paper has the highest sales in Damascus. His opportunism has become even more apparent since the second and third *coups d'Etat*. His paper has often taken a fellow-traveller line. It has been alleged that he receives money from the Soviet Legation and the Banque de Syrie. Employs one or two well-known fellow-travellers as sub-editors.

104. Silo, Fawzi, Brigadier-General

Born about 1895. Moslem from Hama. Commandant Homs Military School in February 1947. In July 1948 made Joint Operational Commander of the 1st and 2nd Brigades on the Palestine front. Head of Syrian delegation during the Syro-Israeli Armistice negotiations in 1949. Appointed Director-General of Ministry of National Defence in April 1950. Minister of National Defence in the Cabinets formed by Nazim Qudsi on 4th June, 1950, by Khalid al Azm on 27th March, 1951, and by Hassan Hakim (*q.v.*) on 9th August, 1951. The real power lay in the hands of Lieutenant-Colonel Adib Shishakli (*q.v.*). Following the latter's *coup d'Etat* of 29th November Brigadier Silo was appointed Head of State and Prime Minister, and on the formation of a new Government on 9th June, 1952, he retained these posts with the addition of the Ministries of Defence and of the Interior.

He does not give the impression of being either intelligent or trustworthy and he is probably xenophobic at heart. Although little more than a puppet he takes his high position very seriously.

105. Stafi, Georgis

Born about 1884. Of Homs. Syrian Catholic Bishop of Damascus (1933). Not a fanatical Christian, i.e., he can bear sight of Christians not members of his church. Is an ardent defender of the "minorities" cause. Generally esteemed. Pro-British during the Vichy régime.

106. Sultan, Abdul Raouf

Secretary-General, Ministry of Justice.

Born 1901 in Damascus. Graduate of Syrian University, and began law practice in 1925. 1926: appointed magistrate in Aleppo; later sat in Magistrates' Court in Damascus, until promoted to higher courts. Resigned from Supreme Court when subjected to pressure by the military régime early in 1952.

Straightforward, efficient and reputedly incorruptible. His appointment as Secretary-General was doubtless the result of his competence and the desire of those in power not to antagonise him further.

107. Surur, Hayyil Shaikh

Born in 1913. Educated by private teachers in Beduin encampment. In 1947 he inherited from his

father, Auda Surur, the leadership of the Musaid tribe which is the largest Beduin group in the Jebel Druze district. He was exiled by the French in 1936 but returned in time to be elected as a Deputy in the Syrian Parliament of 1937. The French would not allow him, however, to take his seat on the grounds that he was too young. In 1939 he migrated with his tribe to Transjordan to avoid further trouble with the Mandatory Power. Failed in the Syrian elections of 1943 but succeeded in 1947. In 1948 he led his tribesmen into Palestine and succeeded in holding Lydda and Ramleh for several weeks until regular forces from Transjordan took over. Although serving under the Jordanian Command he was the only Beduin leader to take an active part in the fighting in Palestine. The Syrian Government whose regular troops had not succeeded so well as Hayyil's Beduin, arrested him on his return to Damascus. He then joined the Popular Party in opposition to Shukri Quwatli and the Nationalists. He attempted to lead all Beduin Deputies into the opposition but failed.

He was arrested by Zaim in April 1949 and remained in prison for several weeks.

He is shrewd, witty and possesses much common sense. He is openly pro-British. His personal conduct is strictly regulated by Beduin ethics. Elected to Constituent Assembly in November 1949.

108. Suweidi, Malatius

Born about 1907 in Damascus. Educated at the Greek Orthodox Community School in Damascus. Entered the Church at an early age, and on completion of his higher education was sent to Alexandria as a deacon where he remained for ten years, with the exception of four years spent in theological and language studies at Athens.

From Egypt he moved to the United States, and during his stay of three years visited many States. The United States being a part of the See of Antioch, the three years he spent there made him eligible for election to the Bishopric. He was elected during his absence there and was elevated immediately upon his return. Is now Deputy Patriarch.

Speaks English and French well.

A friendly, tolerant man. Popular with the younger members of the community on account of his broadmindedness and progressive outlook on social affairs.

109. Tab'a, Azzat, Lieutenant-Colonel

Military Controller of the Office of Press and Propaganda and Director of Army Health Services. Damascene by birth. About 40 years of age. A doctor of medicine. Formerly head of the Military Hospital at Mezzé.

Possesses literary talent and is regarded locally as something of a poet.

An intelligent and capable member of the small group of Shishakli's trusted lieutenants. Diplomatic but determined. Has been assigned the formidable task of reorganising a venal and unscrupulous press in keeping with the other social reforms the régime has undertaken. Visited Britain in 1947. Not ill-disposed to Britain but of necessity supports the régime in its outlook towards all affairs involving Britain and the Middle East. Speaks French well and a little English. Not given to hard work and is invariably suffering from the effects of the night before.

110. Tahsin, Saïd

Born 1904. Damascus. Privately educated. At one time employed as a teacher in Bagdad in elementary schools.

President of "Arab Society of Fine Art."

Father-in-law of Walid Majed, "chef du Protocole" at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Known

to be an ardent fellow-traveller and prominent member of local "Peace" Committee. Attended the Warsaw Conference and has recently been active in producing anti-Western cartoons for Communist-sponsored local newspapers and magazines.

111. Tallas, Assad

Born in Aleppo about 1905. Educated at Fuad I University, Cairo, and later studied in France. Took up teaching and then obtained a post in the Syrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and became head of the Administrative Section. Was at one time Director of Consular Affairs and served in diplomatic posts abroad including Tehran and Athens, where he was chargé d'affaires. While at Athens he was appointed Syrian member of the United Nations Commission in Greece. On his return to Syria he was given a post in the Legal Department of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Tallas accompanied Adel Arslan (*q.v.*) to Bagdad on an official mission during Zaim's régime and while there secretly discussed with the Iraqis the possibility of overthrowing Zaim and bringing about closer relations between Syria and Iraq. On his return to Damascus he began to work upon the late Colonel Hinnawi, to whom he was related by marriage and on whom he exerted a powerful influence. Zaim offended Tallas by transferring him to a minor post in the Ministry of Education in July and this set Tallas firmly and finally against him. Following Hinnawi's successful *coup d'État* against Zaim, Tallas became Secretary-General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and exploited his position to promote Syro-Iraqi union, using the rather stupid Hinnawi as a tool for this purpose. His career was abruptly interrupted on 19th December by the anti-Hinnawi *coup* carried out by Lieut.-Colonel Adib Shishakli and Tallas, after taking refuge in the Iraqi Legation, fled to Bagdad via Beirut. He continues to remain a refugee in Bagdad.

112. Tarazi, Falak (Miss)

Aged about 35. Comes of an old and respected family of Turkish origin. Her father was a Government official during Ottoman days and a land owner on a modest scale. She is well educated and has absorbed French culture to a great degree not only in her education but also in the course of her frequent sojourns in Paris. She gives the appearance of being of independent means and spends most of her time in lecturing and writing. Was until recently a regular weekly broadcaster over Radio Damascus where she spoke on sociology and allied subjects. She is something of an idealist and is usually considered as one of the leaders of a small group of Damascus *intelligentsia*. She has devoted considerable efforts to the organisation of the "Partisans of Peace" in Syria and visited Warsaw as a delegate to the Peace Conference in 1950. She has been largely responsible for the building up of the movement in Syria until her disagreement in June 1951 with the Committee, as a result of which her connections with it have been allegedly cut. She denies membership of the Communist Party but she was always known for her Leftist tendencies prior to her notoriety as a "Peace Partisan," and is certainly a fellow-traveller.

113. Tayyara, Sami

Born in Homs. Age about 47. Comes of a humble family. Took a degree in medicine in France. Member of Akram Hourani's Arab Socialist Party and of the Liberal Republican *bloc* in Parliament. Appointed Minister of Health and Acting Minister of Public Works in the Cabinet formed by Khalid al Azm on 27th March, 1951. Appointed Minister of Education in Government formed on 9th June, 1952. Seems well disposed towards United Kingdom.

114. Trabouki, Izzat

Secretary-General, Ministry of Finance.

Born 1913. Damascus. Graduate of Lycée Franco-Arabe, and of School of Law of Syrian University. Obtained a doctorate of law and a certificate in political science at Paris. Practised law, 1934 to 1938. In 1938 appointed to Ministry of Finance. 1946-1947: lecturer on finance at School of Law, Damascus. 1948: Government representative at Exchange Control Office.

Author of two books, one on agricultural development in Syria (in French), the other on finance.

No political affiliations. Undoubtedly the most influential civil servant in the country.

115. Zaim, Muhammad Saïd

Aged about 50. Born in Hama. Resides in Aleppo. Proprietor of a textile factory and prominent industrialist.

Originally a member of the Nationalist Party but until now his political activities have been behind the scenes.

After acting as secretary to the Aleppo Chamber of Commerce, he has for the past few years been vice-president. He has taken a leading part in commercial life in Aleppo and was last year president of the Aleppo Rotary Club. At a meeting of the Congress of Arab Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in the Lebanon last December he countered anti-British statements by delegates by pointing out that both Syria and the Lebanon owed their independence largely to the British.

Reputed to have made a fortune out of army contracts during the last war.

Appointed Minister of Finance on 9th June, 1952. He is quiet and hard working, a prolific writer and speaker on commercial matters and is essentially sound.

116. Zainuddin, Farid

Born about 1905. A Druse of Lebanese origin. Studied at American University, Beirut, specialising in economics, and later continued his studies in England and France (Doctor of Law, Paris, 1932). Acquired Syrian nationality and joined the Nationalist *bloc*. In July 1938 appointed Assistant Under-Secretary of State in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. After fall of Nationalist Government, went to Beirut. Was a prominent member of the Arab Club in Damascus, the centre of pro-Nazi intrigue. In 1940-41 is believed to have been go-between for the Italian Armistice Commission and Shukri Quwatli. Arrested by Allies and interned until 1943. Director-General of Supply, January to November 1944. Syrian representative on General Supply Council, March 1944. Expert to Syrian delegation to U.N.O. Conference at San Francisco, April 1945. Syrian representative of Preliminary Committee and member of delegation to U.N.O. Conference in London, November 1945. Is believed to have lined his pockets while in Ministry of Supply. Appointed Minister to Moscow in 1947. Member of Syrian delegation to U.N.O. April and September 1947, and again in 1950. Appointed Head of the Permanent Syrian Delegation to the United Nations in June 1951 in place of Paris al Khouri (*q.v.*). When the permanent delegation was temporarily abolished at the end of 1951, he was appointed Syrian Minister in Washington, but was later reappointed head of the reconstituted delegation.

Is xenophobe in general and in the past was pronouncedly Anglophobe; his attitude towards the British now is not clear, but he has not ceased to resent his internment in Mieh-Mieh. He and his wife speak excellent English and French.

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No. 18

SYRIA: HEADS OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

Mr. Samuel to Mr. Eden. (Received 9th July)(No. 106. Confidential) *Damascus,*
Sir, *1st July, 1952.*

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the annual report on heads of missions accredited to Syria.

2. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Beirut, Alexandria and Bagdad.

I have, &c.

A. C. I. SAMUEL.

Enclosure in No. 18

Heads of Foreign Missions in Syria

(Passages marked with an asterisk are reproduced from previous reports.)

Argentina

M. Adolfo Campodonico, Minister. (24th November, 1948).

*M. Campodonico is the first Argentine Minister to reside in Damascus. He came here from Costa Rica. It is not clear to anybody how he and a consul-general can be kept occupied. On his arrival he could speak nothing but Spanish but can now get on quite well in French. He has quite an agreeable wife. (Written in 1949.)

Egypt

M. Hussain Aziz, Minister (1st April, 1951).

*A friendly colleague who speaks good English. He is not very sociable, however, and in conversation is rather reserved. (Written in 1951.)

France

M. Jacques Emile Paris, Minister (8th June, 1950).

*Comes from Sofia and has not previously served in the Middle East. It is often difficult objectively to judge one's French colleagues in Damascus, owing to the deep-rooted French suspicion of British motives in Syria. Though he has considerable charm of manner, he has yet to give me a single piece of information or of advice of interest or value. Both he and his wife, who is a daughter of a former secretary-general of the Belgian Foreign Ministry, spend a large part of their time in Beirut and are clearly bored by Damascus, where most of the work of the French Legation seems to be performed by the counsellor. (Written in 1951.)

Iraq.

M. Mousa Shabandar, Minister (27th June, 1950).

*Smooth and outwardly friendly. Has shown himself ready to co-operate with this Legation by exchanging information. Has a Lebanese wife. (Written in 1951.)

Italy

M. Umberto Natali, Minister (12th October, 1950).

*A modest little man, with a nervous manner. His wife is Hungarian. They are both very friendly and ready to co-operate. (Written in 1951.)

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Pérsia

M. Morteza Mochfegh Kazemi, Minister (29th December, 1949).

*Friendly if rather uninspiring. Married. (Written in 1950.) I learn from Syrian officials that he has been caught out trafficking in gold. (Written in 1951.)

Saudi Arabia

Shaikh Abdul Aziz Ibn Zaid, Minister (25th June, 1944). Also accredited to the Lebanon.

*Doyen of the corps. Although he nominally lives in Damascus, he spends most of the winter in Beirut. Speaks no European language. A frail sick man who looks, and behaves, like a living corpse. (Written in 1951.)

Turkey

M. Aptulahat Aksin, Minister (26th June, 1946).

*M. Aksin came to Damascus from Buenos Aires, where he had spent some seven years. Naturally, as Turkish representative, his position is not an easy one, but he is not an impressive figure, and his conversation, in French, is extremely hard to follow. His wife is quite pleasant and seems to have benefited more from their sojourn in a foreign land than the Minister has. (Written in 1948.) Turkish relations with Syria having considerably improved his position seems much easier. (Written in 1949.)

United States

Mr. Cavendish Cannon was transferred to Lisbon in June 1952. His successor has not yet been appointed.

Yugoslavia

M. Mihailo Javorski, Minister (February 1952).

A Bosnian, aged about 35. Married. Has hitherto worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He gives the impression of being a friendly and intelligent colleague.

Belgium.M. Charles Loodts, Chargé d'Affaires *ad interim* (6th May, 1952).*Resident in Beirut*

(Those marked with a dagger have secretaries or attachés resident in Damascus.)

Brazil

Vacant.

Chile

M. Luis E. Feliu, Minister (16th December, 1950).

CzechoslovakiaM. Karel Stanek, Chargé d'Affaires, *a.i.* (13th October, 1947).**Greece**M. Constantin Himarios, Chargé d'Affaires *a.i.* (13th October, 1951).**Mexico**M. Maro A. Almazan, Chargé d'Affaires *a.i.* (8th December, 1951).

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Soviet Union

†M. Vassili Afanassievitch Belyaev, Minister (3rd March, 1951).

Spain

†Marquis de Castro de Torres, Minister (21st May, 1949).

Switzerland

Dr. Franz Kappeler, Minister (8th January, 1951).

Resident in Cairo

Austria

Dr. Robert Friedinger-Pranter, Minister (7th February, 1952).

Ethiopia

M. Fitaorari Tafesse Habte Mikael, Minister (31st July, 1949).

Netherlands

M. Cnoop Koopmans, Minister (24th January, 1952). (Temporarily resident at Beirut).

Norway

M. Francis Irgens, Minister (6th December, 1948).

Poland

M. Jan Drohoyorski, Minister. Has not yet presented his Credentials.

Sweden

M. Nils Gustaf Weidel, Minister (10th April, 1952).

Resident in Bagdad

Afghanistan

M. Mir Amanullah Rahimi, Chargé d'Affaires, *ad interim* (18th November, 1951).